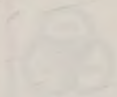


LIVES OF THE EARLY MEDICI  
AS TOLD IN THEIR  
CORRESPONDENCE, TRANSLATED  
AND EDITED BY JANET ROSS WITH  
12 PORTRAITS AND FACSIMILES  
(1910)







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**LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI**

*"It has ever been a hobby of mine, though perhaps it is a truism, not a hobby, that the true life of a man is in his letters. . . . Not only for the interest of a biography, but for arriving at the inside of things the publication of letters is the true method. Biographers varnish, they assign motives, they conjecture feelings, they interpret Lord Burleigh's nods, but contemporary letters are facts."*—Dr. NEWMAN TO HIS SISTER, Mrs. JOHN MOZLEY, May 18, 1863.







LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI.  
*From a picture at Poggio a Caiano.*





LIVES OF  
THE EARLY MEDICI  
AS TOLD IN THEIR  
CORRESPONDENCE

TRANSLATED & EDITED BY  
JANET ROSS



WITH 12 PORTRAITS AND FACSIMILES

LONDON  
CHATTO & WINDUS  
1910

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## PREFACE

MANY a book has been written about the Medici; yet how little has been said about the private lives of the founders of that wonderful family which rose from prosperous middle-class condition to take its place among the sovereign houses of Europe, to seat its daughters on the throne of the Queen-consorts of France, and its sons on the Chair of St. Peter? Their rival capitalists north of the Alps climbed high in those days when the gulf was dug deep between nobles and all who were below them in the social scale. The Fuggers made many alliances with the German and Bohemian nobles, and the Welsers had the unheard-of glory of mating one of their daughters with the Emperor of Germany; does not the Philippine-Welser Strasse in Augsburg commemorate to this day the renown of the match? But neither had the fortune to found a dynasty as did the Medici. They are so inseparably connected with the history of their native city that the biographies have insensibly become sketches of Florentine, even of European history. The men and women have disappeared, and we see instead the dexterous manipulators of tortuous Italian diplomacy, or the splendid patrons of art and literature during the best period of the Renaissance. Yet, in our day, we sometimes like to turn aside from the stage life to learn about the *vie intime* of personages who have become historical. We are

## PREFACE

curious about their doings within the home circle, about their private loves and hates, whether they were good or bad husbands and wives, parents and children. The simpler human interests attract us.

This book attempts to supply such details. It is founded on letters, for the most part private, of Medici men, women, and children, and their friends, written during those decades when the family was being moulded for the great European destiny which lay hidden in the future before it. In these old-world epistles Contessina artlessly displays her household economies, Lucrezia reveals her fondness for bathing, Clarice quarrels with no less a tutor than the celebrated Poliziano about the lessons he gave to her children, and the child Piero tells his father how he has studied hard, even writing in Latin, "in order to give a more literary tone to my letters," and proudly and persistently demands the pony promised as a reward for diligence.

The materials have been gathered from many a quarter. Angelo Fabroni's ponderous tomes, *Magni Cosmi Medicei Vita* and *Laurentii Medicis Magnifici Vita*; the Histories of Florence by Giovanni Cavalcanti, Giovanni Cambi, and Niccolò Machiavelli; rare pamphlets, published in small editions of twenty-five or a hundred copies, by Italian men of letters in honour of the marriage of some friend, which are a mine of wealth; and last, but not least, the Florentine Archives. Most of the letters from the *Archivio Medicei ante Principato* have never been published before, much less translated; others are given here in full, which have hitherto seen the light only in very fragmentary form. The volume can therefore claim to contain a great deal of thoroughly original matter. In them it will be

## PREFACE

seen that well-born or important men and women were addressed as Your Magnificence, and written to and spoken of as The Magnificent. It was, therefore, no special title bestowed on Lorenzo de' Medici, but suiting so well with his character and whole personality it has become, as it were, his property.

My best thanks are due to Cavaliere Angelo Bruschi, librarian of the Marucelliana Library in Florence, without whose valid assistance and advice I should have had great difficulty in collecting the letters; to Dr. Dorini of the Florentine Archives, whose aid was invaluable in helping me to decipher the almost illegible manuscripts; and to Signor Guglielmo Volpi, several of whose pamphlets and articles are quoted. I must also thank the Baroness Mollinary of Como for so kindly having photographed for me her most interesting early portrait of Lorenzo the Magnificent, never before published; and Dr. Giovanni Poggi, director of the Bargello in Florence, for giving me the photograph of Lorenzo's portrait at Poggio a Caiano. The Baroness Mollinary's picture is one of the many that belonged to her ancestor Paolo Giovio, and bears a strong resemblance to the fine miniature of Lorenzo, the property of M. Prosper Villon, reproduced in *Le Musée de Portraits de Paul Jove* by M. Eugène Muntz, in which, however, Lorenzo looks rather older. Both show the same humorous, kindly face, with a strong mouth, determined jaw, and fine eyes. In the miniature the head and shoulders are against and under a baldaquin, on each side of which is a small bit of landscape. Below is inscribed *Laur M P P* and the Medici arms (with six balls), surmounted by Lorenzo's device, three ostrich feathers, white, green, and red (faith, hope, and charity), while a floating ribbon behind bears his motto *Semper*. The portrait at Poggio

## PREFACE

a Caiano is perhaps by Alessandro Allori, therefore of course not contemporary; it may be a copy of an older and lost picture. I must also express my great gratitude to the Rev. Principal Lindsay of Glasgow for kind help and criticism during the progress of my work.

The portrait of Piero de' Medici in the chapel of the Riccardi palace, by Benozzo Gozzoli, has been given sometimes as that of his father Cosimo, or even of his son Lorenzo. But if the bust by Mino da Fiesole, in the Bargello, represents Piero, then he is the man grasping his horse's mane with one hand as he rides by the side of his father Cosimo, who, as we know, generally rode a mule.

JANET ROSS.

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# LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

## INTRODUCTORY

THE ancestors given to the Medici are many, and their origin is not easy to trace amid the conflicting accounts of friends and foes. The latter declare they sprang from the very dregs of the people, and that a charcoal-burner in the Mugello was their progenitor, whose son was a doctor (*medico*). Their friends say they descend from Perseus, from a Roman consul, or even from an emperor. Others state that a brave knight, Averardo de' Medici, came into Italy with Charlemagne and killed the fierce giant Mugello, who for years had kept Tuscany in bondage; while those who cling to the *medico* story, on account of the name, tell of a learned physician who saved the life of Charlemagne by applying cupping-glasses of his own invention. The well-known arms, six red balls on a field or, are accounted for in as many different ways. Doctors' pills, cupping-glasses, apples from the gardens of the Hesperides, dents made by the giant's mace on Averardo's golden shield, and heads of enemies slain in battle by a valiant knight who killed eleven of his assailants, because the oldest shield of the Medici bore eleven balls.

According to genealogists the real progenitor of the Medici was a certain Giambuono. He appears to have been a priest, as is indicated in an ancient inscription on the wall of the church of the Assumption near S. Piero a Sieve in the Mugello. What is certain is that the family owned houses and towers in Florence in the twelfth century in the Piazza de' Medici, afterwards called de' Succhiellinai, near the church of S. Tommaso, which was in the Ghetto, now swept away. There a little inn, Del Porco, used to be pointed out as standing where once was the loggia of the family.

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

We have historical proof of the brothers Chiarissimo and Bonagiunta de' Medici, descendants of Giambuono. Chiarissimo was a member of the council which made an alliance with the Sienese against Semifonte in the Val d'Elsa, when that strong castle was razed to the ground in 1201. Ardingo, a great-grandson of Bonagiunta, was the first of the family to hold high office in Florence. He became Prior of the city in 1291, Gonfalonier of Justice in 1296, and again in the following year. This proves decisively that the Medici were not of the old nobility, which had been excluded from all magisterial offices by a law passed in 1293, called the *Ordinamenti della Giustizia*, which Bonaini terms the Magna Charta of the Republic of Florence.<sup>1</sup> Ardingo's brother Guccio, who was Gonfalonier in 1299, made himself so popular that when he died he was buried with great pomp in a sarcophagus of the fourth century, which stood outside the baptistery. Later it was removed into the cathedral, and in the eighteenth century was placed in the courtyard of Palazzo Riccardi (once Medici), where it still is. The cover, bearing the Medici arms and those of the Arte della Lana, or Guild of Wool, to which Guccio belonged, was made by order of the Priors at the time of his burial.

In 1314 another of the family, Averardo, was Gonfalonier of Justice, and one of his grandsons, Filigno di Conte de' Medici, has left *Ricordi*, or Memoirs, written in 1373, which show how rich and influential the Medici had already become. The book, which still exists in the Florentine archives, was evidently once bound in vellum; the frontispiece is decorated with the Medici arms, six red balls on a field or, and the shield is surmounted by the head and paws of a black wolf rising out of what looks like the coronet of a modern Marquess.

Addressing his children he writes :

"In the name of God and of his blessed Mother Madonna Saint Mary, and of the whole Court of Paradise, who will I pray give us grace to act and to speak well.

"I, Filigno di Conte de' Medici, seeing the late misfortunes of civil and foreign wars and the terrible mortality from the plague sent by our Lord God to this earth, which we fear he may send again as our neighbours have it, will write down

<sup>1</sup> For an account of the *Ordinamenti della Giustizia* see *I Primi Secoli della Storia di Firenze*, chap. viii. Pasquale Villari, Firenze, 1893.

## INTRODUCTORY

the things I see which may be needful for you who remain or who come after me, so that you can find them if need be for any emergency. I pray you to write well in the future and to preserve those lands and houses which you will find inscribed in this book; most of them were bought by the noble knight Messer Giovanni di Conte, my brother of honoured memory, after whose death I began to write this book, taking from his records and from those of others. I beg you will take care of it and keep it in a secret place so that it may not fall into other hands, also because it may be necessary to you in the future as it is now to us, who have to find papers of one hundred years ago, for reasons which you will find written, because States change and have no durability.

"Also I beg of you to preserve not only the riches but the position attained by our ancestors, which is considerable but ought to be higher. It begins to decline on account of a dearth of capable men, of whom we once had many.

"Such was our greatness that it used to be said, 'Thou art like one of the Medici,' and every man feared us; even now when a citizen does an injury to another or abuses him, they say, 'If he did thus to a Medici what would happen?' Our family is still powerful in the State by reason of many friends and much riches, please God preserve it all to us. And to-day, thank God, we number about fifty men.

"Since I was born about one hundred of our men have died; there are but few families and we are badly off for children, that is to say there are few. I write this book in several parts. First I shall note certain facts which are useful to know, then the dowers and as many papers as I can collect, the bills of sale and such like, then all the purchases and who drew up the deeds, and then all the houses and lands we possess. . . ."

Page 84 is interesting as showing where the houses of the Medici stood in Florence, and also that Cafaggiuolo belonged to them in early times.

"In the name of God amen.

"Here I inscribe all our lands and their boundaries and where they are situated, and the houses in Florence, and what possessions came to us from Conte our father in the division made between the brothers (that is the late Conte,



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Messer Jacopo, Messer Giovenco the knight, Talento, Francesco and Chiarissimo) of the inheritance of their father Averardo, those bought by Conte and also those bought by Messer Giovanni di Conte, knight, together with myself Filigno, and Jacopo and Michele, our brothers, during their life. To-day I begin to write and to cause Michele my son also to write on account of the fatigue, and of not being a good penman. God grant we do well.—1373, in February.

“A house with shops in front in the parish of S. Tommaso in the Mercato Vecchio in Florence; the first side fronts the street or rather the Mercato Vecchio, the second boundary is ours, the third is the street wherein stands S. Tommaso, the fourth is Talento di Chiarissimo de' Medici and ourselves. Adjoining this house are two others, three smaller ones and several shops. . . . Also a palace with a courtyard, an orchard and a well, in the parish of S. Lorenzo of Florence, in Via Larga di S. Marco. The confines are first the said street; secondly the sons of Tantini with a common wall between us, saving that what is above their roof belongs to us and to Baglo di Dante, with the wall of our courtyard below; the third is the inn of the Cock, now the property of Niccolò di Cristofano di Geri Gazza, &c.; the fourth is the palace of Andrea Franceschi and Francesco di Biccio de' Medici. A house is annexed to this palace. . . .

“In the name of God amen. Possessions in Mugello.

“The half of a palace with houses around it, a courtyard, a loggia and a wall and moat, with an orchard outside in Cafaggiuolo in the parish of S. Giovanni in Petroio, with the sixth part of the interior courtyard, and the old walls, and all other things pertaining thereto that are in the division. The broad road is to be 7 feet 8 inches wide round the old enclosure of Cafaggiuolo, so that the sons of Messer Giovenco cannot prevent us from using the road in front of the palace and by their wall, as far as the bridge. The moat round Cafaggiuolo is entirely ours as it touches our walls.”<sup>1</sup>

A cousin of Filigno, Salvestro de' Medici, led the Florentine troops against Giovanni Visconti, Archbishop and Lord of Milan, and was knighted on the battlefield of Scarperia. Gonfalonier of Justice in 1370, when Florence was distracted

<sup>1</sup> *Archivio Mediceo ante Principatum. Registro, Della famiglia de' Medici.*



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by the rivalry of the Guelphs and Ghibellines, he, being a Ghibelline, took the side of the people against the nobles, and advocated enforcing the enactments of the *Ordinamenti della Giustizia*, which excluded the nobles from power. But for the moment he failed, and was nigh being exiled when his name was again drawn from the *borsa*, or ballot-bag, as Gonfalonier in 1378. Once more he proposed to apply the law against the Guelph nobles, and meeting with opposition, threatened to resign. One of his friends then appealed to the populace, and the result was the Ciompi riot. The mob broke into the Palazzo de' Priori and the Palazzo del Podestà, burnt many palaces, and knighted sixty-four citizens in the Piazza della Signoria, of whom Salvestro was the first.

His popularity is shown by a sonnet addressed to him by Franco Sacchetti, author of many tales, who rather profanely calls him "non gia Salvestro, ma Salvator mundi." Salvestro was, however, a canny burgher and made some profit out of the revolution, as the rents of the shops on the Ponte Vecchio were assigned to him. Henceforward the Medici were looked upon as the friends and defenders of the people against the *Grandi* or nobles.

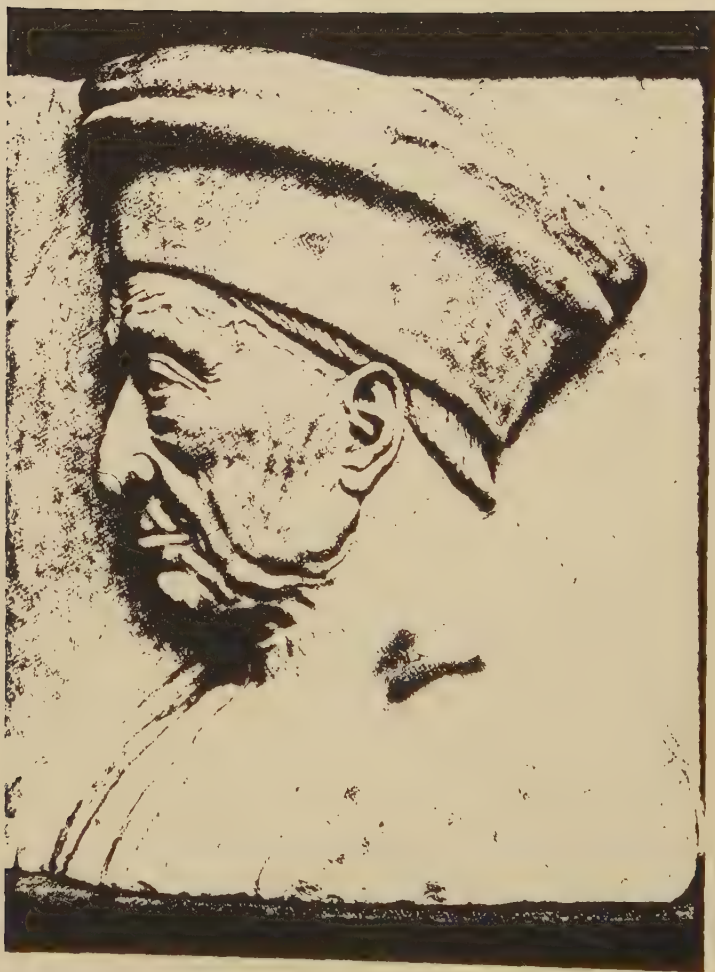
The founder of the line of citizens who ruled Florence like princes was Giovanni d'Averardo, surnamed Bicci, de' Medici, born in 1360. He was several times a Prior, and in 1421 Gonfalonier of Justice. During the Councils of Basel and Constance he made a fortune in exchange, and being charitable was much beloved by the people. His popularity increased when, against his advice, the nobles insisted on advancing to meet the Duke of Milan instead of waiting for him to attack them in Tuscany, with the result that at Zagonara the Florentines were beaten. The expenses of the war exhausted the treasury, and disturbances broke out in Florence. The nobles, fearing a repetition of the Ciompi riots, attempted to form a government of *Ottimati*, as the party of the oligarchy were called, and thus undermine the power of the minor guilds. Some even suggested seizing the property of charitable confraternities in order to obtain money. Giovanni de' Medici was consulted, and declared he would have nothing to do with such robbery. A few years later he successfully advocated the abolition of the odious system of forced loans, and the institution of the *catasto*, which regulated all the taxes to be paid to the Commune of Florence.

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He then became the idol of the people. Cavalcanti writes that when he lay dying on 20th February 1429, "he called his sons Cosimo and Lorenzo, and in the presence of their mother, Piccarda Bueri, of their wives, and of other citizens, spoke to them thus: 'Beloved sons, neither I nor any man born into this world should feel grief at exchanging worldly cares for perpetual repose. I know that the last days of my life are nigh, and where timid or foolish women or cowardly men would feel sorrow, I feel great joy. I leave you in possession of the great wealth which my good fortune has bestowed upon me, and which your good mother and my own hard work has enabled me to preserve. I leave you with a larger business than any other merchant in the Tuscan land, and in the enjoyment of the esteem of every good citizen and of the great mass of the populace, who have ever turned to our family as to their guiding star. If you are faithful to the traditions of your ancestors, the people will be generous in giving you honours. To achieve this, be charitable to the poor, kindly and gracious to the miserable, lending yourselves with all your might to assist them in their adversity. Never strive against the will of the people, unless they advocate a baneful project. Speak not as though giving advice, but rather discuss matters with gentle and kindly reasoning. Be chary of frequenting the Palace; rather wait to be summoned, and then be obedient, and not puffed up with pride at receiving many votes. Have a care to keep the people at peace, and to increase the commerce of the city. Avoid litigation or any attempt to influence justice, for whoso impedes justice will perish by justice. I leave you clear of any stain, for no evil deed has been committed by me. Thus I bequeath glory and not infamy to you as a heritage. I depart joyfully and with more happiness if you do not enter into party strife. Be careful not to attract public attention. I commend to you Nannina my wife and your mother, see that after my death ye change not the habits and customs of her life. Pray to God for me, my sons, that my passage may be crowned by the salvation of my immortal soul. Now take my blessing. Cosimo, see that Lorenzo be kindly and a good brother; and thou, Lorenzo, honour Cosimo as the elder.' Saying this, he passed from this life."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Istorie Fiorentine*, Giovanni Cavalcanti, i. 262. Firenze, 1838.





HIMO DI GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI.  
in the marble relief by Andrea Del  
rocchio (?) in the Kaiser Friedrich  
mum, Berlin.

## COSIMO DI GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI

(1389-1464)

OF Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici's two sons, Cosimo was by far the most remarkable. "The father," writes Gibbon, "of a line of princes, whose name and age are almost synonymous with the restoration of learning; his credit was ennobled into fame; his riches were dedicated to the service of mankind; he corresponded at once with Cairo and London, and a cargo of Indian spices and Greek books were often imported in the same vessel." For even when most deeply engaged in political matters, Cosimo always found time to attend to his business, and himself conducted the correspondence with the heads of the banks which were known throughout Europe and in Asia. All had orders to buy ancient manuscripts and rare books. As a lad he served in the Pisan war, and in 1414 was sent by his father in the suite of Pope John XXIII. to represent the bank at the Council of Constance. After the flight of the Pope, Cosimo left Constance in disguise and returned to Florence, where he was elected a Prior of the city in 1415, and again in 1417.

Cosimo was forty when his father died in 1429. Ammirato describes him as of middle height, with an olive complexion, and of imposing presence. Machiavelli says that he applied himself so strenuously to increase the political power of his house that "those who had rejoiced at Giovanni's death, now regretted it, perceiving what manner of man Cosimo was. Of consummate prudence, staid yet agreeable presence, Cosimo was liberal and humane. He never worked against his party nor against the State, was prompt in giving aid to all, and his liberality gained him many partisans among the citizens. Chief amongst those who helped to consolidate his power were Averardo de' Medici and Puccio Pucci—Averardo by his audacity, Puccio by his prudence and sagacity, augmented his popularity and greatness. The advice and the sane judgment of Puccio

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were so highly esteemed and so well known by all that Cosimo's party was not called by his name but by that of Puccio."<sup>1</sup>

Much of Cosimo's influence and popularity, no doubt, arose from his generosity to men of letters. When Niccolò de' Niccoli, "censor of the Latin tongue," ruined himself by buying books, Cosimo opened an unlimited credit for him at his bank. After Niccoli's death he paid his debts on the condition of being allowed to dispose of the collection of manuscripts, amounting to six hundred volumes. Four hundred he gave to the library of S. Marco, the rest he kept or distributed among friends. Cosimo also provided Tommaso Parentucelli, Bishop of Bologna, with what money he needed; a service that was well repaid when the Bishop became Pope, and made him his banker. Parentucelli catalogued de' Niccoli's library, and noted for Cosimo the books that were necessary to complete it. This catalogue Vespasiano declared to be indispensable to all collectors of books. When the Badia of Fiesole, certainly designed, if not actually built by Brunelleschi at Cosimo's expense, was finished, he summoned Vespasiano, who has recorded their conversation: "One day, when I was in his room, he said to me, 'What plan can you suggest for the formation of this library?' I answered that to buy the books would be impossible, since they could not be purchased. 'What, then, do you propose?' he added. I told him they must be copied. He then asked me if I would undertake the business, and I replied that I was willing. He bade me begin at my leisure, saying that he left all to me, and he ordered that for the money needed day by day Don Arcangelo, at that time Prior of the monastery, should draw cheques upon his bank which would be honoured. After beginning the collection, since it was his will that it should be finished with all speed possible, and money was not lacking, I soon engaged forty-five copyists, and in twenty-two months provided two hundred volumes, following the admirable list furnished by Pope Nicholas V."<sup>2</sup>

Cristofano Landino, Lionardo Aretino (Bruni), whose translations from the Greek were celebrated for their pure latinity, while his speeches were compared to those of Pericles, and Carlo Aretino (Marsuppini), were friends of Cosimo, and members of

<sup>1</sup> *Le Istorie Fiorentine*, Niccolò Machiavelli, p. 240. Firenze, 1900.

<sup>2</sup> *Vita di Cosimo*, Vespasiano, p. 254. Symonds' translation, *Renaissance in Italy*, ii. 127. London, 1897.



## COSIMO DI GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI

the Platonic Academy. They often met in the Badia, and Pico della Mirandola, on whom, says Poliziano, "nature seems to have showered all her gifts," passed some time there in study. In the cell of Ambrogio Traversari in the convent degl' Angeli at Fiesole, Cosimo was wont to pass his spare hours in the company of learned men. He was quick in recognising talent, and possessed the gift said to belong to royalty of suiting his conversation to his visitors. Vespasiano tells us that "when giving audience to a scholar he discoursed concerning letters; in the company of theologians he showed his acquaintance with theology, a branch of learning always studied by him with delight. So also with regard to philosophy. Astrologers found him well versed in their science, for he somewhat lent faith to astrology, and employed it on certain private occasions. Musicians in like manner perceived his mastery of music, wherein he much delighted. The same was true about sculpture and painting; both of these arts he understood completely, and showed great favour to all worthy craftsmen. In architecture he was a consummate judge, for without his opinion and advice no building was begun or carried to completion."<sup>1</sup>

While spending money in a princely manner on works of art, public libraries and buildings, Cosimo lived as simply as any other citizen. Though for twenty-five years he was practically the ruler of Florence, he remained the merchant, the plain burgher, the agriculturist. His estates were in good order; he superintended the planting, and rose early to prune his vines. Gambling he detested; the only game he played, and that but rarely, was chess. Habitually taciturn, particularly in his later years, yet he could give witty and even sharp answers; as when one of his adherents, a loquacious, not very wise man, who, on being named Podestà of a foreign (*i.e.* not a Tuscan) town, asked him for advice. "Dress suitably and talk little," was the answer. To another he said there was a weed that ought not to be watered but allowed to wither, and that weed was envy.

In Cosimo's letters one sees how well his father's last words, "Be careful not to attract public attention," were obeyed by him. The pity is that even those who pass their lives poring over manuscripts in the Florentine archives find the greatest difficulty in deciphering his handwriting, and there are allusions

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, 228.

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to passing events or to people which are impossible to understand, as he uses the *gergo*, or slang, of his day, or nicknames, the meaning of which are lost to us. The date of his marriage with Contessina, daughter of Giovanni de' Bardi, Count of Vernio, is not recorded, but her eldest son, Piero, was born in 1416. The little we know of her, chiefly from her letters, depict her as a good, rather parsimonious housewife and a tender mother. In 1427 Cosimo was at Ferrara, and she writes :

CONTESSINA DE' MEDICI *to her husband* COSIMO  
DE' MEDICI *in Ferrara*

This evening I have a letter from thee and have understood how much we are to pay for the barrels at Careggi ; as soon as they arrive I will do as thou sayest. I have a letter from Antonio Martelli saying that he is sending nine bales of our linen cloth, which were at home, by now I think they must have arrived, give orders that they be put in a dry place so that the linen be not spoiled. At Careggi every one is well as usual and I am also well, may it please God that it be so in the future ; one of our labourers it is true, who lives where the young partridges were, rather frightened us, but he is well again. I wrote to thee by Giovannino, so be not chary with ink and paper, so be it is not wearisome to thee. Ginevra and Pier Francesco<sup>1</sup> are in the Val d'Arno and Amerigo Cavalcanti is with them. They are all well as Giovannino will have told thee. Lorenzo<sup>2</sup> and I are here, both well. Shouldst thou want anything let me know. Above all be careful of thy health and keep a good watch on thyself. No more at present. May Christ preserve thee.—In Florence, March 4, 1427 (1428).

La Contessina who commends herself to thee.

Matteo gave me the little keys, if thou hast need of them

<sup>1</sup> Ginevra Cavalcanti, wife of Lorenzo de' Medici, Cosimo's brother, and her son, Pier Francesco.

<sup>2</sup> Lorenzo de' Medici, Cosimo's brother.





Non ò tue lettere poi ti scrissi per una vostra de dì 29 currente viddi  
 dubj v' erano in animo veduto le differenze sono nella domanda et  
 chome dite è da dubitare non tanto per le differenze quanto perchè si  
 vede el ducha non viene schietto su questi ragionamenti, pure vorrei voi  
 si fossi ingiegnati sendire che differenza è questa et maxime de fatti di  
 Berghamo e che inporta et chosì quelle di Valchamonicha la quale a me  
 pare picchola se altro non v' è aschosto et poi le chose sono ridotte qui  
 non si vorebe per si picchola chosa tanto bene restasse et pero credo  
 s'ingiegnereate a rottura non si vengha et chosì si vuole fare et vedere  
 se di queste differenze si potesse fare remissione nel chardinale chome de  
 l'altre sarebe tanto maggiore lo schorno se a rottura si venisse quanto  
 per ognuno si tiene a certo pace deba seghuire fu qui jeri Franceschino  
 la Macerata et secondo da lui ritrassi non pareva avesse nuova se di  
 questo fatto si facesse questo dicho per tuo aviso che mi fa assai dubitare  
 benchè jo creda pure che chosti di cò a dire chon el chardinale per suo  
 nteresso dovria farne ogni chosa possibile X de fatti delli grani chome  
 per altra ti dissi non te ne gravare troppo in confortarè perchè n'aresti  
 graveza et per ire chosì ci è chommodo Ser p. el chompare che altra  
 volta non se ne faceva menzione e ora sta chosì forte et acordasi il  
 chonpare e'lla chomare nonn è però che per questo si volgla laschare  
 nulla adrieto nè qui anche si lascerebe ma stimasi sendo d'achordo  
 de l'altre chose per questa sola non vorebe rimanesse et forse questo  
 medesimo stima el chonpagno ora Idio ne lasci seghuire el meglio de fati  
 de' Bordoni che si mandi fiorini 24 per lane a le gienti di Lomb e chosì  
 di nuovo mandi a quelli di Riviera e rimettonsi in punto tutti e chosì  
 subito passato pasqua si manderà i resto in modo potranno scrivere  
 e simile al marchese credo se si fosse fatto già è un mese sariano in  
 migliore disposizione le chose non sono.

Di verso Gienova cì è la cho [sa] prospere sechondo usanza pure invero  
 credo abino assai travaglio anno di nuovo perso uno chastello tra Gienova  
 et Saona et chosì tutta quella riviera di ponente è in arme et non v'è  
 dubio se si facesse quello si potrebe quella terra se li leverebe ma meglo  
 sarebe a non ne avere a fare prouva.

Ne piu per fretta X<sup>o</sup> ti ghuardi in Firenze a dì primo d'Aprile 1428.

CHOSIMO.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Letter is addressed on the outside of the sheet :

[spectab] ili viro Averardo de  
 [Medio] is Oratori florentinorum  
 [Ferrari] e fratri honorando.

(Archivio Mediceo innanzi il Principato, Filza 2, No. 306.)

[illegible]

Exp. 100



## COSIMO DI GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI

tell me. Thy mother who put that Santelena<sup>1</sup> into the bag with the others thou hadst from here is much surprised that thou hast not found it, she remembers to a certainty putting it into the bag the first thing after thy departure. She wrote to-day and answered about this. Those who were in debt for their rents have paid to Piero d'Orlando according to Lorenzo's orders.<sup>2</sup>

The following letter was written during the negotiations for peace with Visconti, Duke of Milan. Florence and Genoa had fared badly in the war. The former had been defeated over and over again, and the whole of the Western Riviera had been overrun by the Milanese troops. The interference of Venice had changed the state of affairs, and the Duke of Milan was desirous for peace. Averardo de' Medici with Palla Strozzi were the ambassadors of Florence, and Cosimo discusses the difficulties attending the negotiation. The Florentines thought that Venice was too grasping, as she demanded Bergamo as well as Brescia; but the real crux of the problem was that the Duke of Milan held tenaciously to his conquests in the Riviera. Peace was finally concluded on April 28, 1428. The Cardinal di Santa Croce had been appointed by the Pope as arbiter between the parties. Part of the letter refers to Florentine internal politics, to which now we have no clue; we also see how these great Florentines mingled their private mercantile affairs with grave political matters.

### COSIMO DE' MEDICI to AVERARDO DE' MEDICI, *Ambassador to Ferrara*

I have not had any letter from you since I wrote. By yours of the 29th I saw the doubt in your mind seeing the difference in the demand, and as you say there is reason for suspicion, not so much on account of the differences as because it is evident the Duke [of Milan] is not straightforward in this matter, so I wish you to try and discover what the

<sup>1</sup> Crusaders returning to Italy brought with them medals with the effigy of S. Helen. These were called Santelena, and gradually the name was given to other medals.

<sup>2</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza xi. No. 233.

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

difference is, especially about these affairs at Bergamo and what they mean, and also those of Valcamonica, which seem to me of small account unless there is something concealed. As matters stand here, one would not desire to move for so small a thing, and so I trust you will do your utmost to prevent a rupture; we shall do the like, and see whether it is not possible to refer these differences to the Cardinal [di Santa Croce] like the others. The shame would be great to fall out just when every one expects peace to be made. Franceschino of Macerata was here yesterday, and from what I could gather had not heard what was to be done in this affair; this I tell you for your guidance, as it seems to me very suspicious, although I think the Cardinal for his own interest will do all that is possible. About the wheat business, as I said in my last, do not overburden yourself, else you will have trouble; as it is, it has been a convenience. Ser P., the godfather,<sup>1</sup> of whom there was no mention last time, is now in a strong position, and godfather and godmother are united. This is, however, no reason for neglecting to take precautions, and we shall take them; but as we are agreed about other matters, we do not wish to draw back on this point alone, and perhaps our companion thinks the same. Now let God lead us on the right path. As to the affairs of Bordoni, let 24 florins be sent for the wool to the people of Lombardy, and send again to those of the Riviera, thus setting all in order; and directly after Easter the rest shall be sent, so that the same can be written to the Marquess. I think if this had been done a month ago, things would be in a better condition than they are now.

Towards Genoa things go on as usual, although I think they are hard pressed; they have again lost a castle between Genoa and Savona, so that all the western Riviera is under arms, and there is no doubt that were we to do what we could do the province would rebel, but it is better not to put it to

<sup>1</sup> It is impossible even to guess at who "Ser P., the godfather," or "the godmother" are. As has been already mentioned, Cosimo often alludes to people by nicknames or initials.

## COSIMO DI GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI

the proof. I write no more, as I am pressed for time. Christ guard you.—In Florence on the 1st day of April 1428.

COSIMO.<sup>1</sup>

The letters written by Cosimo de' Medici to his cousin Averardo de' Medici, in October and November of 1430 and February of 1431, relate to the costly and disastrous war waged against Lucca, and require a few explanatory sentences.

The war was proposed to the Commune of Florence by the impetuous young leader of the aristocratic party in the city, and Cosimo, who after the death of his father Giovanni was the recognised head of the democracy, supported the proposals of his opponent and rival, Rinaldo degl' Albizzi. The war was popular. The Florentines believed that they had secured the acquiescence of the Duke of Milan and of the Pope. All things seemed to favour them (letter of February). The plan of the Florentine generals in the field was to starve Lucca into surrender by seizing on the districts of Camaiore and Pietrasanta, whence the Lucchesi drew their supplies. The "Ten of the Balìa" or Florentine war committee countermanded this prudent plan of campaign and their troops could effect nothing against Lucca. The Lucchesi were hard pressed, however, and appealed to the Duke of Milan. He permitted Francesco Sforza to take service under Lucca, and that great general soon reduced the Florentines to extremities. In their need they resolved to bribe Sforza, and on receiving 50,000 florins he abandoned the Lucchesi. The "tyrant" of Lucca, Paolo Guinigi, was overthrown; the city became a Republic, and sued for peace. But Florence resolved to prosecute the war, and engaged Count Guido Antonio di Montefeltro, Lord of Urbino, as their general. Thereupon the Lucchesi again appealed to the Duke of Milan, who permitted Niccolò Piccinino and his troops to take service under Lucca. The continual interference of the "Ten" with their generals in the field resulted in one defeat after another. In these circumstances Cosimo wrote his October letter. He recognises that the conduct of the war by Florence had been disastrous; sees, when too late (for the Milanese troops prevented it), that Lucca ought to have been starved into surrender; and declares that

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza ii. No. 302.



## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

the only way out of their difficulties is for Florence to induce Venice to attack Milan from the north. As the "Ten" from their gross mismanagement of the war had occurred great opprobrium in the city, and as there was little prospect of matters improving without aid from Venice, the astute Cosimo advises that none of his prominent friends shall stand as candidate for election to the Balìa. The letter of December relates to a proposed embassy to Venice to urge the great Republic to attack Milan.

The war went on for three years longer, and though we have no more comments of Cosimo on the matter its course may be indicated. Venice did at length yield to the prayers of the Tuscan Republic, and this brought her rival Genoa into the fray. At last all parties were weary of the strife and desired peace. The Marquesses Ettore of Este and Lodovico of Saluzzo were named arbiters. The Cardinal di Santa Croce again worked for harmony. A general peace was concluded on April 26, 1433, and its publication in Florence on May 10th was celebrated with all manner of popular rejoicings.

In the midst of these wars and intrigues it is pleasant to see the good Contessina careful only that her boys should be brought up in the old Florentine fashion and that her husband should be properly clad.

Cosimo evidently continued to "be chary with ink and paper," at all events to his wife; as when he was again absent at Ferrara with their two sons, Contessina corresponded with Giovanni, the youngest, who was barely fourteen.

### CONTESSINA DE' MEDICI *to her son GIOVANNI* *at Ferrara*

I wrote to thee a few days ago, so have but little to say. By a letter from Ser Alexo I gather you are all well, God be thanked. We are the same, thanks be to God. I hear that thou desirest to come home and dost not like the place. Thou shouldest be glad to be there, if only to be in the bank and to learn something. Besides it is not healthy here. Therefore, my son, I beg thee not to think of returning until the plague has ceased, and say the same to Piero. Let me know what



## COSIMO DI GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI.

clothes he has had made as I do not know what he wore when he left, and he has not asked me to send his coat lined with cloth. It has been very hot here for several days, and I suppose will have been the same there; so be careful and keep cool. I do not know why Cosimo has not told me to send his summer clothes, but I think he intends to return any day. Do thy best to please him in all things, and see that he wants for nothing; though they tell me he is quite fat, which is all that is needful. Commend me to madonna Dina and salute monna Ginevra and thank them from me; Ser Alano tells me they treat you both as though you were their brothers. I should also like much to know whether thou art working in the bank, thou or Piero, and whether Cosimo makes use of Piero. Mind and write this to me. I add no more. Christ guard thee.—At Castelluccio, 6th June 1430. THY CONTESSINA.<sup>1</sup>

In the autumn of the same year Cosimo again left Florence, partly on account of the plague, but probably also on account of the bitter party strife in the city. He writes to his cousin from Verona and then from Ostiglia, where he heard the news of the defeat of the Florentine troops near Lucca.

### COSIMO DE' MEDICI to AVERARDO DE' MEDICI at Pisa

During the last few days I have written thee several letters; this morning I received thine of the 18th and with it some letters received by thee from Florence; I have understood, &c. &c., and reply herewith.

I see thou hast been at Florence and understand thou hast to go there again; the death of Francesco di Tomaso is a great loss, but if the plague increases I advise thee not to think of business but of saving thy life.

The affairs of Lucca do not appear to turn out as we expected, which displeases me; and the money spent on Count Francesco [Sforza] was thrown away. Every one laughs at us

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza v. Avanzi, No. 9.

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because he could not remain on account of the plague, and only consumed the provisions of the people. It is clear that all that happened and is happening at Lucca has been done with the knowledge and by the orders of the Duke [of Milan], particularly as the principal fortresses are in his hands; it appears to me therefore that there is no hope of getting them by treaty or by any way save famine, and I suspect the Duke has known how to grasp fortune, and his troops being near, has provisioned Pietrasanta. The war will thus last longer than we wished, and all because we would not when we could. May God forgive those who are the cause. If some of the present Signori had not enough sense to be of the Ten of the Balìa, instead of ten they should be made nine . . . as I already told thee. It does not seem to me 'advisable to be one of the Ten of the Balìa this time, partly to let others have their turn, partly because, on account of party divisions, I do not think the affairs of our city can prosper; things will go as they did before or even worse on account of events in Lombardy, for if the enemy is not attacked from there, it is useless to expect help from here. I am therefore writing to the Gonfalonier and to Antonio di Ser Tomaso to beg that neither Lorenzo<sup>1</sup> nor I should be nominated, and I advise thee to do the same. There are Messer Niccolò Valori and Luca di Messer Maso who would do well and be pleased.

In my last I told thee that Lorenzo and the children were going to Venice, as there are some cases of plague here; now they are gone. If it continues I suppose we must also leave. . . . No more at present. Christ guard thee.—Verona, 21st October 1430.

COSIMO DE' MEDICI to AVERARDO DE' MEDICI

I arrived here late this evening and found thy letter of the 4th telling me about the affairs of Lucca; right glad was I

<sup>1</sup> Cosimo's brother.

<sup>2</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza ii. No. 588-89.

## COSIMO DI GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI

to get it, as yesterday on the road to Venice I heard far worse news. God be thanked. We certainly seem to have shown but little prudence; we will talk of this when we meet. Our people ought to hear what is said of us and how little we are esteemed; if we go on thus we shall be treated like Jews. I just hear that I have been elected ambassador together with Francesco Tornabuoni, and have understood about future movements. I was on the point of coming back on account of our own affairs and also about this nomination, of which I have only now been told, for it will be most inconvenient if I have to go, on account of our private affairs and also because I am not properly prepared, being away from home. I have therefore determined to come back at once and try to be exonerated. I think our friends will be willing to serve us if thou bestirrest thyself. Thou writest as though my going was certain, so perhaps I shall receive orders and have to start without returning home, which would be most awkward. If it be so tell Bernardo de' Medici to send me those suits which are at home, for as thou knowest we are in mourning and I have no clothes with me; also I shall have to provide myself with attendants and horses, I have but seven, and must have twelve at least. I write this, not because I have made up my mind to go, for this journey would be most irksome, but because if it is absolutely necessary I must go in a manner befitting the honour of the Commune. . . . No more. Christ guard thee. —In Ostilia [near Rimini] on the 10th day of December 1430.

*P.S.*—I intend taking the road by Ravenna and Faenza.

Cosimo did not go, and Francesco Tornabuoni was sent alone to Venice.

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza ii. No. 612.

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COSIMO DE' MEDICI *at Florence to* AVERARDO  
DE' MEDICI *at Pisa*

I wrote to thee the other day by Pietro Chaetano, and have had no letter from thee since. This will be given to thee by Battista of Verrazano, who was it seems once employed in thy office, and is, I am told, a worthy man: he asks me to recommend him to thee, and I do so.

About the affairs of Lucca I say nothing, because where thou art thou wilt hear them sooner than I. There are those who, hoping to see injury and infamy inflicted on others, would inflict injury and infamy on the Commune, and try with all their might to bring this about; which shows an evil nature. Nevertheless I think this enterprise is generally popular, and seeing things have gone so far as to implicate the honour of the Commune, every one ought to favour it as much as possible; and this I am doing here, and advise thee, although I know there is no need, to act likewise.

Letters have come from the Duke displaying great affection for this Commune and promising every help in this affair. There are also letters from our ambassador at Rome, saying that the Pope and all the Cardinals are of the same mind, so it appears to me that they are abandoned by all, and if they are wise will submit.

From Lorenzo<sup>1</sup> I have a letter of the 30th, and by what he says he must now have left Venice for Milan together with Messer Andrea Contarini. They have hopes of doing good business during this year, particularly as I understand the Duke is in need. Thou shalt hear as soon as I know anything.

I hear thou hast had a few cases of plague, which grieves me: here also in the last two or three days there have been some cases, which makes one fear it may increase. The loss and damage to the city will be great. I have been thinking

<sup>1</sup> Cosimo de' Medici's younger brother.

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where to go, and as far as I can learn there are three places, either Arezzo in thy house near Anghiari, Bologna or Modena, or some distance into the Venetian territory, where it appears to be perfectly healthy. It does not seem to me wise to come there [Pisa] or to go near Siena or Perugia, for they are all suspect, as is the Romagna and the Malatesta district, where also they are preparing for war. As I said it is a serious matter, and I should like to have thy advice. No more at present. Christ guard thee.—February 1430 (1431).<sup>1</sup>

In April 1433 the war with Lucca came to an end, leaving things very much as they were before, and the bitter hatred between Cosimo de' Medici and Rinaldo degl' Albizzi grew in intensity. The nobles accused Cosimo of using his riches to buy popularity, and he withdrew almost entirely from public life and retired to Cafaggiuolo, his fortress-villa in the Mugello. What followed is best told in his own words, translated from his diary.

On the election of the new Signory (September 1433) it was rumoured that during their rule great changes were to be made. News was sent to me in the Mugello, where I had been for some months in order to escape from the contests and divisions in the city, that my presence was necessary. So on the 4th of September I returned, and on the same day visited the Gonfalonier and the others, as well as Giovanni dello Scelto who I thought was my friend, and who was under obligations to me, as were also the others. When I told them what I had heard, they denied it, and told me to be of good cheer, as they hoped to leave the city in the same condition as they found it when their time was up. On the 5th they called a council of eight citizens, saying they desired their advice on certain matters. They were Messer Giovanni Guicciardini, Bartolommeo Ridolfi, Ridolfo Peruzzi, Tommaso di Lapo Corsi, Messer Agnolo Acciaiuoli, Giovanni di Messer Rinaldo Gian-

<sup>1</sup> *Magni Cosmi Medicei Vita*, Angelo Fabronio, ii. 28.



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figliuzzi, Messer Rinaldo degl' Albizzi, and myself, Cosimo. So although, as has been said, it was reported that a revolution was imminent, yet, having their assurances and believing them to be my friends, I did not credit it. On the morning of the 7th, under colour of the said council, they sent for me; and when I arrived at the Palace I found most of my companions and we talked together. After some time I was told by order of the Signory to go upstairs, and by the captain of the infantry I was put into a room called the *Barbaria*,<sup>1</sup> and locked in. On hearing this the whole city rose. During the day a council was held by the citizens who had been summoned, and the Gonfalonier told them I had been detained for a good reason, which would be explained another time, and that the Signory desired no advice on this point, and so dismissed them. And the Signory banished me to Padua for a year. This decision was at once made known to my brother Lorenzo, who was in the Mugello, and to Averardo, my cousin, who was at Pisa. The news was also sent to Niccolò da Tolentino, captain of the Commune, who was my good friend. Lorenzo came to Florence the same day, and the Signori sent for him, but he being warned why they wanted him, left at once, and returned to Trebbio. Averardo also left Pisa in haste, as they had given orders to seize him. Had they taken us all three, we should have been in evil plight. Niccolò da Tolentino, on hearing the news, came to Lastra with his company, intending to raise the city, so that it might be released. At the same time, when it was known in the mountains of the Romagna and in other places, great numbers of foot-soldiers went to Lorenzo. But the captain and Lorenzo were advised not to make a disturbance, or even might befall me, so they desisted. Although this advice was given by relations and friends, and in all sincerity, yet it was not good, for had they advanced at once I should have been free.

<sup>1</sup> Or Alberghettino, a small cell about eight feet by six, in the tower of the Palazzo Vecchio.

<sup>2</sup> A castle near Cafaggiuolo.

## COSIMO DI GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI

and he who was the cause of all would have been undone. We may, however, say that all was for the best, as in the end good came of it, and more honour to me, as I shall relate hereafter. My friends being averse, as I have said, to create any disturbance, the captain returned to his quarters, pretending that he had come for another reason, and Lorenzo went to Venice with my sons, taking with him all he could of money and small valuables. And the Signori banished Lorenzo to Venice for a year, myself to Padua for five years, and Averardo to Naples for five years. Then on the 9th the bell was rung for a parliament, and those who had been the cause of all assembled on the Piazza with much infantry. Twenty-three citizens were also summoned, verily a small number, and but few of the people were present, because in truth the mass of the citizens were ill-pleased.

### THE ORATION OF COSIMO DE' MEDICI TO THE SIGNORY *when sentence of exile was pronounced against him.*<sup>1</sup>

If I thought that this my misfortune and terrible ruin might serve to bring peace to this blessed people, not only would exile be acceptable, but I should even welcome death, if I were sure that my descendants, O Signori, might pride themselves on my having been the cause of the wished-for union of your Republic. As you have decided that I am to go to Padua, I declare that I am content to go, and to stay wherever you command, not only in the Trevisian State, but should you send me to live amongst the Arabs, or any other people alien to our customs, I would go most willingly; and if your Lordships command me to discover the origin of the ill, as a beloved son is bound to obey his father's wishes and a good servant the orders of his master, so would I obey you for the peace of your people. One thing I beg of you, O Signori, that seeing you

<sup>1</sup> Cosimo's oration is not in his diary, but is given by Fabroni, *Magni Cosmi Medicei Vita*, Angelo Fabronio. Pisis, 1784, ii. 75.

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intend to preserve my life, you take care that it should not be taken by wicked citizens, and thus you be put to shame. I do not so much fear the pain of death as the abominable infamy of undeserved assassination, for a violent death is the manifest sign and outcome of a bad life, and I have not led the life of a villain, but of an honest and good merchant. Even if I have not been faultless, I have always tried to merit the love of good men, because my actions were good. As, however, disaster comes to me by your orders, I accept it as a boon, and as a benefit to me and to my belongings. Have a care, O Signori, that those should not have their way who are in the Piazza with arms in their hands and anxiously desire my blood, without regard for my innocence. My pain would be small, because such a death being over in a short time cannot be very painful or hard to bear; nothing is so brief as death. But you would earn perpetual infamy by having made me a promise which was broken by villainous citizens: infamy is worse than an innocent death. If I go to the Trevisian State, I leave my heart and my soul with you, and shall only be happy when I can do something for the good of your people, as I pray you and every good citizen to do. Every trouble will be easy to bear as long as I know that my adversity will bring peace and happiness to the city. I know, and this is no small comfort to me, that I never permitted wrong to be done to any one. I never frequented the Palace<sup>1</sup> save when I was summoned; I never roused hatred of the Republic amongst your subalterns, because I never ill-treated them; I always declined to be nominated an official, which is often prejudicial to the body and hurtful to the soul; with no small pride I affirm that none can say my ill-behaviour ever caused a city to rebel or to be taken from you; on the contrary, our money bought several: ask your soldiers how many times they were paid by me for the Commune with my

<sup>1</sup> To frequent the Palace of the Signoria was esteemed in Florence the sign of an intriguing politician. Giovanni had advised his sons "to be chary of frequenting the Palace" (see p. 6).



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own money, to be returned to me when convenient to the Commune. Never have I been found wanting when the Commune could be enlarged, and although I am exiled, I shall ever be ready at the call of this people. In conclusion, O Signori, I pray God to keep you in his grace and in happiness in this fortunate Republic, and to give me patience to bear my unhappy life.

Balia was given by the parliament to certain citizens and I was banished to Padua for ten years, Lorenzo to Venice for five, Averardo to Naples for ten, Orlando de' Medici to Ancona for ten years, and Giovanni di Andrea di Messer Alamanno and Bernardo d'Alamanno de' Medici to Rimini. My branch of the family were created Grandi (*i.e.* incapable of holding any magisterial office), with the exception of the sons of Messer Vieri, and the sons of Antonio di Giovenco de' Medici, because Bernardetto was much beloved by the Captain of War, and in deference to the Captain, Averardo and his brothers were passed over. We were more rigorously dealt with, particularly in that I was forbidden to sell any possessions or to touch my money in the Monte, and I was kept in the Palace until the 3rd day of October.

When this was known in Venice three ambassadors were sent here, who left no means untried to procure my liberation, offering to keep me in Venice, and promising that I would do nothing against the Signory, and would obey all orders. Though they could not obtain my freedom yet their advent was most useful, for there were those who desired my death, and they secured a promise that no harm should be done to my person. In like manner the Marquess of Ferrara sent orders to the Captain of the Balìa, who was Messer Lodovico del Ronco of Modena, a subject of his, that if I were put in his hands he was to treat me as though I were Messer Lionardo his son, and that if he fled with me he was to fear nothing.

They kept me, as has been said, until the 3rd of

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October for two reasons ; first, to obtain permission from the Balìa to rule the city according to their pleasure, threatening to kill me if it was not given ; thus those of my friends and relations who were in the Balìa were fain to agree to all they wished. Secondly, they thought to ruin us by preventing me from making use of what was mine. But in this they failed, for we lost no credit, and many foreign merchants and gentlemen offered to us, and even sent to Venice, large sums of money. Finding at length that their plan of making us bankrupt did not succeed, Bernardo Guadagni (the Gonfalonier), being offered money by two persons, 500 florins by the Captain of War, and 500 by the treasurer of S. Maria Nuova, which were paid him in cash, and Mariotto Baldinetti being offered 800 florins by Baccio d'Antonio di Baccio, they took me out of the Palace and accompanied me beyond the Porta S. Gallo. They had small intelligence, for they might have had ten thousand or more for allowing me to escape from peril.

On the 4th October I arrived at Cutigliano in the mountains of Pistoja, being accompanied by two of the Eight of the guard. The mountaineers presented to me wax and grain as though I had been an ambassador. On the 5th I left and arrived at Fassano in the territory of the Marquess of Ferrara, accompanied by more than twenty of the mountaineers. On the 6th I reached Modena, and the governor met me on behalf of his lord, presented gifts, and next morning went with me as companion and guide. On the 7th I was at Bondeno and next day went by water to Francolino, where I waited two days for Antonio Uguccone de' Contrari, who made me many offers of service from the Marquess. On the 11th I arrived at Venice, being met by many gentlemen, our friends, together with Lorenzo. I was received like an ambassador, not like an exile. Next morning I visited the Signori to thank them for all they had done for my welfare, saying that I owed my life to them. I was

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received with more honour and affection than I can describe ; they pitied my sufferings and offered the Signoria, the city, and their treasure for my needs, and a house. Many gentlemen visited me and brought me gifts. On the 13th I left for Padua according to command, and Messer Jacopo Donato went with me and lodged me in his fine house, furnished with linen, beds, and eatables fit for the greatest personage, and he remained with me until I returned to Venice about the 20th. At Padua, by order of the Signoria of Venice, they offered to place at my disposal anything I wanted. I have recorded these honours that were paid to me in order not to seem ungrateful by not mentioning them, and also because it is incredible that, banished from home, I should yet be treated with so much honour ; for generally one loses one's friends with one's fortune. Lorenzo was informed with what honour I had been treated by some merchants, and also by a servant of the Signoria who came to Padua with me, and who had been ordered not to speak about it.

Bartolommeo de' Ridolfi being Gonfalonier of Justice, I asked leave of the Signori to be allowed to live at Padua, Venice, or elsewhere, in the Venetian territory, and the permission was given, but with orders not to approach within 140 miles of Florence. This was done to please the Signoria of Venice who, through their ambassador, Messer Andrea Donato, asked it. It is true that severe penalties were attached to the grace, as can be seen in the document.

After giving the names of the new Gonfalonier and Priors (who were elected every two months), Cosimo continues :

The people and all good citizens being discontented, Antonio di Ser Tommaso Nasi came to me at Venice and begged me to draw nigh to Florence, offering to escort us home in case we were attacked. Also many of our relations and friends wrote to us. We thought it better to first ascertain the intentions of the Signori, and replied we would

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do nothing against their wishes. For this we sent Antonio Martelli from Venice to learn what they wished. From him we got the good news that we were to come. On receiving the letter Lorenzo and I, Cosimo, left on the 29th of September; Averardo, being ill of fever, remained in Venice. On the 30th we reached Ponte a Lago and lodged in the house of the Magnificent Uguccione who, together with the Marquess, had collected at our request a large body of foot-soldiers in the mountains of Modena and Frigano, together with 200 horsemen he had in his pay, to accompany us as had been previously arranged. On the 1st October, while we were at mass, a courier arrived from Antonio Salutati with letters stating that the intentions of the Signori having become known in the city, and our arrival being expected, our enemies, that is to say Messer Rinaldo degl' Albizzi, Ridolfo Peruzzi, and others had taken up arms on the 26th to the number of 600. But their heart failed them towards evening, and being persuaded by Messer Giovanni Vitelleschi, then Bishop of Recanati, and afterwards Archbishop of Florence and a Cardinal, who was my good friend, they went to S. Maria Novella, where dwelt the Pope.<sup>1</sup> Hearing that our friends were well provided with arms and with men, and being in fear for their lives, Messer Rinaldo, Ormanno his son, and Ridolfo Peruzzi remained there that night, and their companions dispersed and put away their arms. The Signori summoned a large force of infantry to come into the city, while from the Mugello, the Alps, and Romagna more than 3000 men came to our house. Niccolò da Tolentino was called with his company, and on the 29th, the day of S. Michael, a parliament was held on the Piazza, at which the people assisted fully armed. Their number was great, and good order was kept. Balia was given to . . . citizens and they annulled all that had been ordained the year before. First they decided that Cosimo and Lorenzo should be reinstated in their former positions—there were

<sup>1</sup> Eugenius IV. was a fugitive in Florence.

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not four contrary votes—so we were pressed to come home with all speed. Having read the letter, we at once sent it to Venice, where it caused much rejoicing, and we then went to visit the Marquess, who showed even more pleasure than ourselves. After thanking him for all the favours he had shown us we left Ferrara on the 2nd and got to Modena next day. The Governor and the Podestà came out to meet us with many citizens, and we were received most honourably in the Marquess's house. All our journey was at his expense, and everywhere we found men-at-arms who had been ordered to accompany us; but there being no need for them we dismissed them. On the 5th we reached Cutigliano and then Pistoja; and exactly at the expiration of a year, on the very same day, *i.e.* the 5th October, we again set foot in the Commune at exactly the same place. I record this because when we were banished some well-affected and kindly persons told us that before the year was out we should be recalled, and once more find ourselves in Florence. Many citizens came out to meet us on the road, and at Pistoja the whole population was at the gate to see us pass fully armed, for we would not enter the town. On the 6th we arrived at our own house, Careggi, to dinner, and found much people. The Signori sent to tell us not to enter the city until they told us, and this we did. At sunset they sent to bid us come and we set forth with a great following. But as the road we were expected to take was crowded with men and women, Lorenzo and I with one servant and a mace-bearer of the Commune rode round the walls. Going behind the Servi, and then behind S. Reparata and the Palazzo del Podestà, we entered the Palazzo de' Signori without being seen, as every one was in Via Larga, waiting for us near our house. The reason why the Signori did not wish us to enter by daylight was lest we should be the cause of an uproar in the city. By the Signori we were received most graciously. We thanked them with fitting words, and they insisted on our remaining in the Palace with them and some



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other citizens. We did so. We found that before we arrived Messer Rinaldo and Ormanno his son, Ridolfo Peruzzi, and many other citizens had been banished. The city was quiet, though the people were always in the Piazza, and in the Palace were many armed men for security.

Cosimo gives the names of the Signory for November and December and continues :

They banished many citizens and set down (*i.e.* made *Grandi* or nobles) many disloyal families and did many things favourable to the city. During their rule the Balìa given to various citizens expired, the Squittini, or Scrutinies, came to an end, and the borse, or ballot-bags, remained for five years in the hands of the Accoppiatori, that is to say, the borse of the Priors, so that they could make whomsoever they would Priors and Gonfaloniers of Justice. In January my name was the first to be drawn from the borse as Gonfalonier, and in my time no one was banished nor was ill done to any one. I caused the sentence of death passed upon Francesco Guadagni, and upon some others whom I found in the hands of the Captain of the Balìa, to be commuted to perpetual imprisonment. Also I ordered the armed men who stood at the door of the Palace to be removed and the Palace and the Piazza to be kept as they were before the revolution, and I prolonged the league with the Signory of Venice for ten years.

“Seldom has a citizen returning triumphant from a victory,” writes Machiavelli, “been received by such a concourse of people and with such demonstrations of affection as was Cosimo on his return from exile, saluted by all as the benefactor of the people and the father of his country.”<sup>1</sup>

It was probably while at Venice that Cosimo bought the slave girl by whom he had a son, Carlo, who was brought up for the Church and recognised as belonging to the family. He inherited his father's tastes, and was employed by him and by

<sup>1</sup> *Le Istorie Fiorentine*, Niccolò Machiavelli, p. 220. Firenze, 1900.

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Piero to buy books, manuscripts, statues, &c., in Rome. He became a Canon of the cathedral in Florence and Arciprete at Prato, where he died. The number of female slaves imported into Florence in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was a most disturbing element in family life and the cause of much jealousy, as can be gathered from the novelists of the time. Nearly all came from Caffa (Theodosia in the Crimea) and from the mouth of the Tana. Caffa must have been practically a Genoese settlement, as the Genoese consul levied a tax on every slave that passed through the town, and they were many. Hundreds of Circassian, Tartar, Armenian, Georgian, Arab, Turkish, Russian, and Greek girls were shipped, chiefly to Genoa and to Venice, where the trade had existed since the eighth century. In Florence the duty paid on every slave that entered the city must have brought in a considerable sum to the Commune, as owners were obliged to register every newly-acquired slave within two months and to have him or her baptized, if the rite had not been already performed. One would have thought that good Catholics might have had some qualms of conscience about keeping a Christian as a slave, but Sacchetti writes :

“May a slave being born a pagan who becomes a Christian be sold? I say yes. None may be free who do not believe that Christ will come again. Even though I buy a slave who is then baptized, he or she is baptized as a servant and a subject and is like unto one in prison, who cannot give a bond or go bail, and most of them go to baptism like oxen. Baptism does not make them Christians, and no one is obliged to set them free even if they be Christians unless they wish. I do not say that if you perceive them to be good, and that they desire to be good Christians, you should not set them free, but you would commit a sin if your slave is like most, even if he or she be a Christian, to set them free, for you take the stick from off their backs and give them full scope to do every sort of evil.”<sup>1</sup>

The saintly Archbishop Antonino is of the same opinion as the novelist. He declares that baptism does not free a person from slavery, *quia servitus introducta est etiam de jure divino et per jus gentium et jus canonicum approbata*.

By a law of 1366 the flight of a slave was declared a serious offence; any one aiding or inciting a slave to run away was fined 200 florins (piccoli), half to go to the Commune, half to

<sup>1</sup> *Sermoni Evangelici*, Sacchetti, p. 94.

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the owner. The seduction of a slave was still more severely punished, and the seducer was held responsible for her price if she died in childbirth. If the father was a free man the child was also free, and the father was bound to provide for it.

From 1366 to 1397, 259 Tartars, 27 Greeks (from Constantinople or from Rhodes), 7 Turks, 3 Slavonians, 3 Circassians, 2 Bosnians, 1 Arab, 1 Saracen, and 1 Candiot, nearly all girls from nine to twenty-four years of age, and 26 little boys or lads, are carefully described in the register. They cannot have been handsome, as many were marked with smallpox, others had scars (*margines*) which were probably tribal marks.<sup>1</sup>

They were sold either *sub jugo perpetue servitutis*, or for a certain number of years. Thus Rucellai bought a slave for eight years, but finding that she was with child he sent her back to her former owner; many were bought, or rather hired, for two or three years as wet-nurses. Baldovinetti in his *Ricordi* or Memoirs notes: "On May 7, 1376, I bought a slave for thirty-five florins from Bartolommeo of Venice, named Tiratea, or Dorothea, a Tartar from Russia. She was about eighteen years of age, and Ciecì the broker only put twenty-five florins into the bill of sale on account of the duty. With brokerage and duty she cost me one florin, and four florins for clothes, as she was almost naked when I bought her. I sold her in September 1379 for thirty-six florins.

"In 1380 I bought on November 28th a slave for forty-five florins, her name is Domenica, she is fair-skinned and comes from near Tartary. I bought her of Bartolommeo of Venice, who in writing declares her to be sound in all ways. With brokerage and other expenses she cost me before I got her home eleven golden florins, and as she was almost naked, altogether forty-seven florins.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A slave, Margherita, ten years of age, is thus described by her owner Lapini: *Pellis ulivigne cum margine magno in testa apud cilium sinistrum, margine in gena sinistra prope nasum, naso rincagnato, aurichulis olim foratis, hodie reclusis, resaldatis* (register of June 18, 1367). She cost twenty-nine golden florins. Another, Exilana, a Tartar, is described as of: *Pellis ulivigne, cum margine in cornu sinistra, parva, et alia margine in templa dextra, oculis quasi suffornatis et litiginibus per faciem* (register of April 1, 1389.) Many are described as *bucterata vaiolo per totam faciem*, and only one is *pulcra corpore*. In the bill of sale they are generally guaranteed, *sana et integra omnibus suis membris tam occultis quam manifestis, et specialiter a morba caduca*, which seems to show that the slaves were subject to epilepsy.

<sup>2</sup> *Memoriale del Baldovinetti*, Cod. Cart. Magliabecchiana.







COSIMO DI GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI.  
*By Jacopo da Pontormo. In the Convent  
of S. Marco, Florence.*

*Alinari*

## COSIMO DI GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI

In the fifteenth century prices rose, as the Florentines insisted on having Russian or Circassian girls as being better-looking. Their reputation for honesty and morality did not stand high, and they were often brutally ill-treated and imprisoned in the dreaded prison of the Stinche for stealing, &c. Alessandra Strozzi, writing to her son Filippo at Naples in 1465, warns him about two he thought of buying.

"Thou tellest me in thy letter of the 28th that a slave is offered thee who was here with Lionardo Vernacci and that thou wouldest have taken her but for the old one thou hast in the house. I must tell thee that she is not fit for thee according to my ideas. Lionardo's wife had her four or five years, and as she did not learn and was of a bad disposition they feared she might do some ill to herself or to others, so they got rid of her; she was also dishonest. They sold her to Antonio della Luna, with whom she remained but a short time, as he would not have her and sent her back; so she was sent down there [Naples]. Lionardo's wife had her for sewing, but she had no aptitude for it. Had she been a good servant they would have kept her for themselves. Thou sayest thou hast one now who belonged to Filippo degl' Albizzi; she was highly thought of and well treated, but was sold because wine began to affect her and made her extremely lively, and also she was immoral. Having a wife and children in the house he would not keep her. She is praised for loyalty and intelligence. Now do as thou wilt. . . . I have told thee what I know."<sup>1</sup>

Towards the end of the fifteenth century the manumission of slaves begins to be mentioned in wills together with bequests to hospitals and convents. By the word *este civis romana* the slave became a free man or woman, could own property, buy and sell, and act in all other respects as if free-born.<sup>2</sup>

### COSIMO DE' MEDICI to his son PIERO DE' MEDICI at Venice

Send by the women who are returning the things mentioned in the list given to Ser G., and look closely yourself, as is but right, after what is sent here and what remains there.

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere di una Gentildonna*, &c., p. 504.

<sup>2</sup> Most of the facts are taken from *Le Schiave Orientali a Firenze nei Secoli XIV. e XV.*, Saggio di Agostino Zanelli. Firenze, 1885.

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

Put the books that are in my desk into a small strong-box so that they should not be opened, and see that the others which we lent should be sent back in such a manner as not to spoiled.

It seems to me that thou shouldest remain at Venice this winter, for there is nothing doing here, and thus thou canst devote thyself to learning something of the affairs of the bank and of book-keeping. I have ordered a book which thou art to keep according to instructions which Antonio Martelli will send thee. In this way thou wilt learn book-keeping properly, and canst return here at Lent.

Be careful to conduct thyself well at home and abroad, so as not to put either me or thyself to shame. Consort with our friends according to usage; make thyself acquainted with what is doing in the company, and learn what is going on.

Try to get back that book on ethics from the son of Messer P. Córro,<sup>1</sup> and the Sallust and Suetonius I lent to G. Lignacci, in one volume. If they have done with them get them back before S. Lucia (13th December). Also get back a small volume of Chrysostom which they say they want to translate. Keep the books from Nicola de Servi, as is said in the minute given to Ser G., and send back twenty or twenty-five volumes of our books of each subject. Thou canst put them with the quilts, or in other bales, so that they should not be spoiled, and take care that those which remain are not gnawed or spoiled.

As I said before, for many reasons I think it would be better for thee to remain at Venice, for nothing of any good is doing here. But if thou wishest to return here, do as thou wilt. Nought else to say.—[No date.]

COSIMO.<sup>2</sup>

The letter of Lorenzo de' Medici and those of Francesco Sforza to Cosimo relate to a second war with Lucca, and need some explanation. The recall of Cosimo from exile, as told in his diary, was followed by a wholesale banishment of his

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps an abbreviation of Cornaro.

<sup>2</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza xiv. No. 469.

## COSIMO DI GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI

enemies from Florence, and left him practically master of the Republic. The exiled Florentines naturally desired to return, and according to the custom of the time were eager to invoke foreign aid. The times for long offered no opportunity. But in 1436 Genoa at last shook off the yoke of the Duke of Milan and became a republic. The sister republics of Florence and Venice at once allied themselves with the new free State, and Filippo Visconti believed himself to be seriously threatened by the new league. He had at the same time lost the services of one of his two great generals. Francesco Sforza, determined to acquire a principality for himself, had seized part of the Marches which nominally belonged to the Popes. In these circumstances the Duke of Milan resolved to attack Florence, the one of the allies which lay nearest to him. While the Florentines engaged mercenary troops (Taliano, or Tagliano, mentioned in the letters, being one of the leaders of small bands) and named Sforza the General of the Republic—a very untrustworthy general, as events proved. In the war which ensued Lucca was attacked by the Florentines and defended by the troops of Milan. In 1438 Florence was twice threatened by Visconti's army, then in the territory of Lucca. The second time they were led by the famous condottiere Niccolò Piccinino, and Francesco Sforza had orders to oppose him and if possible to seize Lucca. The attempt failed, partly because Sforza, always hoping to obtain the hand of Madonna Bianca, Visconti's illegitimate daughter, did not wish to offend him by fighting against his troops, partly because Venice, jealous of the possible acquisition of Lucca by Florence, laid claim to his services and refused to pay her share of his stipend unless her commands were obeyed. Cosimo went to Venice "thinking," writes Machiavelli, "to be able to persuade her. To the Senate he pointed out the condition of Italy, the power of the Duke of Milan, his reputation and the number of his troops, and concluded by saying that if the Count (Sforza) went over to him they would together command the sea, and the liberty of Venice would be endangered. To this the Venetians replied that they well knew their own power and the power of the Italians, and believed they could defend themselves. Adding that they were not in the habit of recompensing soldiers for serving others, and that the Florentines, having made use of the Count, might pay him themselves. They considered it

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more necessary for the safety of their State to lower his pride than to give him money; and the ambition of men being unlimited, if he were paid now without serving them, he would eventually advance far more dishonest and dangerous demands. Thus it seemed to them desirable to curb his insolence before it became too great. But if out of fear, or for any other reason, the Florentines desired to retain his friendship, they were at liberty to pay him. Thus Cosimo returned without concluding anything."<sup>1</sup>

Cosimo never forgave the Venetians for traversing his plans, and the enmity between the two Republics began from that day.

NICCOLÒ FORTEBRACCIO to COSIMO DE' MEDICI and  
NERI DI GINO CAPPONI

*Magnifico Domino et spectabili viro Fratribus carissimus Cosme de Medicis civitatis Flor. Vexillifero et Nero Gino de Capponibus.*

*Magnifice Domine ac spectabilis vir frates carissimi*,—In order that you may be kept informed of what sometimes happens here I tell you that the messengers of your magnificent General Count Francesco [Sforza] had the courtesy to come rather to us than to those to whom they were sent. For your information I send you the enclosed copy of a letter from the aforesaid Count found in the bosom of one of his people, by which you will understand, &c. You will no doubt take counsel about it with your friends, so that I shall not have to call you blind Florentines,<sup>2</sup> as others have called you before. By my faith you ought not to be, but rather you should have a hundred eyes like Argus.—Assisi, January 5, 1436 (1437).

NICOLAUS FORTEBRACCIS.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Le Istorie Fiorentine*, N. Machiavelli, p. 242. Firenze, 1900.

<sup>2</sup> Alluding to the old proverb, *Piorentini ciechi, Senesi matti, Pisani traditori, Lucchesi signori*. Niccolò Fortebraccio, formerly in the service of the Florentine Republic, was the great rival of Francesco Sforza. These two condottieri had both seized on separate portions of the Marches, and while Sforza's fortress was Ancona, Assisi was that of Fortebraccio. The two captains fought for the mastery in the Marches, and in the end Fortebraccio was defeated and slain.

<sup>3</sup> *Cosmi Vita*, &c., *op. cit.* ii. 110 (Ex Filza 18).



## COSIMO DI GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI

LORENZO DE' MEDICI to his brother COSIMO DE' MEDICI,  
*ambassador to Ferrara, in the name of the "Dieci di  
Balìa"*

*Spectabilis collega noster carissime*,—Yesterday I wrote to thee by Messer Alexio. Since then we have nought from thee. Now we write because having turned over in our own minds this affair of Taliano and consulted with other citizens about it, it seems to us that it would be an excellent thing for the State of Count Francesco and for the League if some arrangement could be come to between His Holiness the Pope and the aforesaid Count as to the Marches, as thou art aware was once proposed. We therefore tell thee to employ every possible means to achieve this, which would be a most excellent thing, and as soon as thou canst learn aught about the intention of the Holy Father let us know, because until we hear from thee we shall not communicate with the Count.

To-day we have received a letter from our ambassadors to the Count, of which we enclose a copy. It appears to us a new departure, of which we know nothing, which we do not understand, nor can we judge how the Signoria of Venice will take it when they hear. Think over it well, and if it seems good to thee to tell them or to take any other steps, do so, only make them understand perfectly that we have nothing to do with this affair, which is quite outside our intentions, and above all declare that it is our desire to live in perfect brotherhood and friendship with that Signoria, and thus to cause the Count to keep on good terms with them. If this letter finds thee at Ferrara, and thou thinkest well to send or to write to Venice about this business, or if thou thinkest better neither to send or to write, do as it seemeth best to thee, for we place complete trust in thy well-known prudence. To-day Messer Giuliano Davanzati has been named ambassador to Venice by



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the Signori and the Colleges, and they have sent for him to Pisa.—Florence, January 29, 1437 (1438).

DECEM BALIE.<sup>1</sup>

COUNT FRANCESCO SFORZA to COSIMO DE' MEDICI

*Spectabilis ac Magnifice vir tanquam pater carissime*,—I have read your letter and see you suspect that Niccolò Piccinino is not following the course traced by the Illustrious Duke of Milan, and you beg me to come to a good understanding with Niccolò, lest danger to the Magnificent Commune of Florence and to myself should ensue. As to the said Niccolò, I cannot believe he would act thus. First, on account of the great honours he has received and is receiving from the Illustrious Lord Duke, who only now has with great pomp declared him Marquess and Count of the house of Visconti with the right of bearing their arms. Secondly, because being of a certain age and with so great a reputation in the past, I do not believe that he would run the risk of being reviled in the present. Also he must know that he cannot swallow the world, and that it might happen to him as it does to oxen when they leave their stables in the morning, who think they are going to pasture, but are put to the plough; to him also the contrary might happen to what he expected. Thirdly, as you know, he has published everywhere a letter declaring his allegiance to the Duke of Milan.

As to your advice about being good friends with him, I think you say well; and by the copies of my letters to Niccolò, which Lorenzo must have sent you, you will see whether it is my fault or his that this has not succeeded. It is true, and I declare to you, that I do not intend to lose my honour or my possessions for the sake of his friendship, and it would be a strange thing if in order to gain the friendship of the said Niccolò, I, who have always transacted and settled all disputes

<sup>1</sup> *Cosmi Vita*, &c., *op. cit.* ii. 133.

## COSIMO DI GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI

between the Duke and myself, and those arising from them, should be the first to lose what is mine, and what has been gained by my own exertions. I am certain that even should I wish to give away my possessions, or to make any sort of compromise which would indicate a doubt as to my ownership, you, whom I regard as a father, would not allow it, seeing how my reputation would suffer.

To conclude, I have agreed with the Duke of Milan and have the agreement in my house, which I quite believe he will observe. In the document there is no mention, either for good or for evil, of Niccolò Piccinino, so I have nothing to do with him, and am much astonished at the things he demands of me. Now either he does this with the knowledge and consent of the Duke or not. If with the Duke's consent it is done with the intent that this affair should go on and that your Signoria should break the promises and contracts with me, which I do not believe; if done without the Duke's knowledge it is most probable he will take another course. In so doing he would give us every right to oppose him, and he might in many cases be a loser, in one among others which would bring infinite loss and ignominy upon him, that is his Company, for eight out of ten of the men have wives or children, so that what would happen I know not, and do not see that Niccolò would gain either profit or honour. My opinion, which I have not breathed to man alive, is that the Duke has consented to Niccolò putting forward these demands, not seeing how to refuse him permission to make them, but not with the intention that we should come to blows. And you will see that Niccolò will eventually follow the course traced out by the Duke, and that all these intrigues and demonstrations, and loud talk, wherein Niccolò shows such valour, are rather scarecrows to frighten people; but scarecrows are good for frightening kites and such-like birds of prey, I do not heed them, being the son of a Sforza and not of a kite. Let what will happen, as long

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as none can say that I have been the cause of any troubles. I am not ; and I believe I shall be held guiltless by God and by the world. But whoso tries to take from me what is mine will find it far harder and more thorny than to demand it, as at present. I have replied to the Marquess, so there is no more to say.—Given in my Camp near Arezzo, 28th May 1438.<sup>1</sup>

### COUNT FRANCESCO SFORZA to COSIMO DE' MEDICI

*Magnifice tanquam Pater carissime*,—I have received your letter in cipher and have understood what you say about the affairs of Florence, Venice, and Macerata ; I need say no more, because Messer Rinaldo will inform you of everything. I thank you for the news about Lombardy. I had heard something of the sort here, and that the Venetian troops were as though they did not exist, so little are they esteemed by those of the Duke of Milan. The arrival of the person sent by the magnificent Signoria of Florence will be most welcome to me, the sooner he comes the better I shall be pleased.

Piero Gian Paolo [Orsini] passed through here and sent to tell me that if I wished he would join me, as he is disengaged, and says he has been badly treated with regard to money, and also that others no better than himself, such as Tagliano and Luigi del Verme, have been set above him and have received more honours, so nothing will induce him to remain there, which may be useful. It would be good in every respect to have him, but you know what are my expenses, so that I cannot alone undertake to engage him. Therefore I wish the Signoria of Florence would do so at the rate of 8 ducats a month and 1 for commission, whereas the Signoria pays 12 for each man. I pray you let me know quickly as to the intentions of the Signoria, so that I may know what to do. Until I have your reply I shall keep the affair in suspense,

<sup>1</sup> *Coemi Vita*, &c., *op. cit.* ii. 131.

## COSIMO DI GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI

although I am not sure whether he really means what he says or not. If he does, the thing may be arranged ; if he does not, it will fall of itself, and at any rate we may discover why he came here. For it is better to be forewarned and on one's guard against the craft of others. I have no more to say save that I am advancing into the Marches and shall be near there.—*Paratus ad omnia*, 11th August 1438.

FRANCESCO SFORZA VICECOMES,  
*Comes et Marchie, &c.*<sup>1</sup>

### COUNT FRANCESCO SFORZA to COSIMO DE' MEDICI

*Magnifice tanquam Pater carissime*,—The honourable Alamano is going to inform the Signoria exactly how things are, and from him you will have ample information. And as I think you will discuss whether it will be better to side with the Signoria of Venice as has been suggested, or with Niccolò Piccinino, as you will see in the despatch brought by the said Alamano, I hereby give you my opinion. Seeing that the Signoria of Venice are up to their throats in water, and that their State is half ruined, and that now, when the need is great, they do nothing ; and also considering that to remedy this state of things they will need much time, and will delay when quickness is necessary ; and also considering that the Signoria of Florence, yourself, and others, were always advised to ally yourselves with the said Piccinino, I conceive that it is far more dangerous to steer a middle course than to side with one or the other. For these reasons it is far better to side with Niccolò Piccinino, particularly as the Duke of Milan has several times advised me to do so, and has just written me duplicate instructions, saying he will never give me Madonna Bianca, or anything else I desire from him, unless I am in perfect accord with and make an alliance with Niccolò Piccinino. This can be done to avoid all trouble. So I send

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., ii. 126.

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Battista my secretary with my conclusions for you to see, and have taken time enough to answer for the reply to come from Florence; for whatever you decide is to be done, will be well done. In case you do not agree, take the course that seems best to that Magnificent Commune, only let me know; for what I once said I say again, that my wishes are those of that Magnificent Commune. Only I wanted to give my opinion. If the Magnificent Commune and you decide for Niccolò Piccinino, you can tell Battista to write at once without referring to me, and to follow his instructions, because the Commune is contented with what I have done. Despatch the courier to Mantua, for he knows that road, and in case he has not passed through let him wait. But if the alliance with Niccolò Piccinino does not please you do not write there, but to me here as quickly as possible. In any case negotiations with Venice must be kept open, and if you write to Battista be so good as to tell me at once, so that I may know how things go.—Given in our Camp, 22nd August 1438.

FRANCESCO SFORZA,  
*Vicesomes et Marchio, &c.*<sup>1</sup>

The careful, rather fussy nature of Contessina is shown in this letter to her son, who was evidently staying, together with his younger brother Giovanni, with his uncle Lorenzo, perhaps at Trebbio, the old castle on a hill above Cafaggiuolo in the Mugello.

CONTESSINA DE' MEDICI to her son PIERO DI COSIMO  
DE' MEDICI

MOST DEAR SON,—Thou tellest me to send thee the grey cape lined with lynx, because thou hast suffered from the cold. But why? For hadst thou asked for it before I should have sent it as I did the other. It appears to me you have all decided

<sup>1</sup> *Cosmi Vita, &c., op. cit. ii. 124.*



## COSIMO DI GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI

not to return to Careggi on Monday where, thanks be to God, we are all well. It will be a happy hour, for it seems to me a thousand years till you come home again. I am sure you are all very busy there, particularly Ginevra,<sup>1</sup> so help her in every way that thou knowest and canst, and keep thy things in order and don't leave one thing here and another there, and tell the other boy to do the same. It would be well that both of you should order a pair of shoes from P. Thou hast a pair of hose with the shoes, but he has not. So I send thee a pair of his oldest hose which button on to the shoes. Tell the bearer who it was that sent thee those new shoes which do not fit, and he will inform Francesco Martelli who ordered them for thee. If thou hast aught to send in the bag of Antonio Martelli's messenger do so, unless it is something that has to pay duty. I was going to send some cloth hose, but as thou art coming back so soon I shall not trouble about them. Let me know what thou sendest by the messenger. No more. God guard thee.—Florence, the 14th day of October 1438.<sup>2</sup>

The two following documents relate to the celebrated Council of the Church which met at Florence during Cosimo's second term of office as Gonfalonier, or chief magistrate. The Œcumenical Council of Basel had actually come into conflict with Pope Eugenius, in the end deposed him, and declared the papal chair vacant. Whereupon Eugenius ordered the Council to transfer its sittings to Ferrara, excommunicated all its members who refused to obey and packed the assembly with his adherents. But a pestilence broke out at Ferrara, and proposals were made to bring the assembled ecclesiastics to Florence. The citizens were eagerly excited, for both the Patriarch and the Emperor of Constantinople were expected to attend. The Pope arrived in Florence on January 2nd, 1439-40, the Patriarch on the 12th, and the Emperor John Palæologus on the 15th February (the entry of the latter is represented in the fresco in the chapel of the Riccardi palace),

<sup>1</sup> Ginevra Cavalcanti, wife of Lorenzo de' Medici, Cosimo's younger brother.

<sup>2</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza xvi. No. 8.

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and were all sumptuously lodged. The essential findings of this Council are important, for they were reproduced in the Canons of Trent. It was supposed to unite the Greek and Latin Churches, but its real result was to introduce the Italians to ancient Greek literature, and, if such things can be dated, it marks the beginning of the Italian Renaissance.

Cosimo's brother Lorenzo de' Medici was sent to Ferrara in December 1438 to arrange with the Pope about transferring the Œcumenic Council to Florence. The instructions given by the Signory are curious and show how burdensome the Councils were to the cities in which they were held.

### COMMISSIO LAURENTII DE' MEDICIS, 3 *Decembris* 1438

Thou art to go to Ferrara and present thyself at the feet of H.H. Pope Eugenius, commending to him our city, and this Signoria and our whole people, as faithful and devout sons of Holy Church and of His Holiness, offering our city and our people to His Holiness.

To descend now to substantial matters; thou wilt say that this Signoria has heard that His Holiness is inclined to come to Florence with his Court, and the Greeks, and the other members of the Council gathered together there. Having heard this the Signoria send thee to H.H. to devoutly offer our city as the residence and the abode of H.H. and his Court and the others above mentioned; being moved thereto, as in all matters, by their special devotion towards H.H.

Should His Sanctity ask anything special for the Greeks thou wilt answer that we shall willingly provide houses for them gratis, without demanding any rent, and that we shall strive to render the houses suitable for their various degrees of nobility. If money for the maintenance of the Greeks is mentioned, which we hear amounts to 1500 florins a month, thou art to say that our Commune is very short of money on account of the long war, &c., and for this reason our Commune would be most grateful not to be burdened, but nevertheless if absolutely necessary we are ready to lend H.H. the said amount of



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1500 florins, or of ducats, every month, on receipt of a promise and valid security as to repayment at a given date, to be agreed upon by both parties. For as the Greeks come on business of the Church, it is only reasonable that the Church should pay and bear the burden. It is enough if we advance the money every month, which will only be repaid after some time. Otherwise it would seem as though we had bought his visit, which would not be at all to the honour of our Commune, and we are certain His Sanctity does not desire us to do anything which would be dishonourable to our Commune.

We consent to begin the payment of 1500 florins, or ducats, per month, from the day the Greeks leave Ferrara, and to continue it while they are in Florence, but not for more than eight months.

If agreements and conventions for the Court are mentioned, such as taxes on houses, jurisdiction, immunity from excise duties in and out of the town and such things, and houses for the Lord Cardinals, &c.; thou art to say we are ready to concede everything that is reasonable and just, and that the last time H.H. was at Florence with his Court, agreements and conventions were made, and the same thing can be done now. When H.H. is here we can settle, and add or correct whatever is reasonable on one side and the other

### *Additio facta Commissioni Laurentii de' Medicis*

Lorenzo, thou seest the commissions we have given thee in the full instructions. Strive to carry them out. But if the Pope insists on having money for the expenses of the Greeks without giving any security or promise to repay, reduce the various amounts as much as possible, so as not to exceed 1500 ducats a month, or at the utmost 1700 ; to begin when the Court arrives here, or, that being impossible, when they leave Ferrara, and then only promise money for eight months and no longer.

If the Pope will not consent to the agreements about his

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Court mentioned in thy instructions being drawn up here, ask what he demands, and look at the conventions conceded to him when he was here last, and act upon those within certain limits, for some of them need revision. The necessary changes have been noted at the end of each article.

The Signoria think the Pope ought gladly to promise and to give security for the repayment of the money used for the expenses of the Greeks; reason and justice demand this, therefore do thy best in this matter, so shalt thou reap honour and the Republic benefit by thy intelligence and industry. Should the Pope ask for any security for his own person or that of others, see that thou understandest clearly the nature of such security and write to us here; we will then do what His Sanctity wishes.<sup>1</sup>

### FRANCESCO SFORZA to COSIMO DE' MEDICI

*Magnifice vir et tanquam Pater honorandissime*,—If I have erred in writing my humble opinion to Your Magnificence, I beg you will not attribute it to presumption, but rather to my fidelity, and to affection for the State of our Lord the Pope and for your Commune. I do not deal in occult secrets, but speak of what I have seen in the past while weighing present events, which are by no means clear. Believe me, Cosimo, my motives are not dictated by passion, because I am the devoted and faithful servant of our Holy Father, of Holy Church, and especially of Monsignore the Florentine Cardinal, therefore I think the present opposition of His Reverence to the Lord of Foligno is, *sententia mea*, not only untimely but dangerous to the State of His Holiness and may be also to yours. I do not say this to excuse the errors of the said Lord, indeed if it were of any use I would blame him, but to try and ward off imminent danger. You know the position of Foligno, her Lord can do much damage with even a small number of

<sup>1</sup> *Cosmi Vita.*, op. cit. ii. 135.

## COSIMO DI GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI

men. The Perugians are suspicious, and suspicion is a malady one cannot doctor, so that a great disaster and much trouble may arise in the land, and it is ill fighting with desperate men. Believe me that other lords and communes are as suspicious as the Perugians, each one is intent on guarding his own State, and the discords of parties here are not good for the State of our Holy Father, for Holy Church, or for your Commune. It seems to me that for the common good Monsignore the Cardinal should rather attend to the conquest of Romagna; he could do nothing more useful, it would cut the passage of the Ducal troops, and it is no longer a good frontier for the League or for you gentlemen of Florence. If ever the possession of Romagna was necessary it is so now, considering the action of the Council towards His Sanctity; although from what I hear it will not lead to much, still it unsettles the minds of the people, and Italy is altogether in a disturbed condition, as you see. The establishment of Romagna as a barrier would be a great boon to the State of His Holiness, to the Church, and to yourselves; if we do not strike when we can, when we wish to do so it will be too late. Remember that the last time we fell out with the Lord of Foligno he obtained help from troops in Romagna; had they been in Lombardy they would not have come, indeed they could not. I pass over many things which it would be difficult to answer, but I beg of you, Cosimo, to think over this, which touches your Republic very closely, and of all the troubles which are brewing or which may brew from the Alps downwards; do your best to find a remedy, and you will be the author of peace and quiet in all Tuscany. You may rest assured, Cosimo, that I write in all sincerity and truth, without subterfuge, if you will believe me. Not only my small faculties but my life is at the service of our Holy Father and of Holy Church, and also at that of your Commune. One thing I will not conceal, and that is that I suspect this enterprise of Foligno is distasteful to the Illustrious Count, and having entered with such goodwill and liberality into the

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

affair, great caution must be used not to do anything he would dislike. I write all this not with the desire of pleasing or of displeasing any one, but to satisfy myself, as I conceive it to be my bounden duty, seeing the affection shown me by His Holiness and by Monsignore your Cardinal, and the great benefits I have received from your Commune. I should be very glad if you would impart what I have written, if it so pleases you, to Neri di Gino and to Piero di Messer Luigi. Be assured, Cosimo, that for good reasons I do not mention many things which I well understand. Offering myself, &c.—Siena, July 20, 1439, *manu propria*.<sup>1</sup>

CONTESSINA DE' MEDICI to her son GIOVANNI at the  
*Baths of Petriolo [near Siena]*

MOST DEAR SON,—The reason I write is that this morning at table Cosimo told me that Maestro Mariotto had gone to spend eight days with thee, and said that when Maestro M. returns he will let me come to be with thee, so I pray thee to ask him to remain with thee as long as thou art there, as I think thou hast need of him, and also Cosimo is well pleased that he should remain, and bids thee arrange so that he may be content. Let me know, for if he comes away nothing shall prevent my coming, for on no account will I permit thee to be there without him or me, so tell me his intentions. Had I known when he left I would have saved him the trouble and come myself. Tell me whether thou hadst rain on the day of thy departure, and if thou hast need of anything write to me. I say no more. Christ protect thee.—In Florence on the 13th day of September 1443.

MONA CONTESSINA DI COSIMO.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Cosmi Vita*, op. cit. ii. 161.

<sup>2</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza viii. No. 336.



Karissimo figliuolo, la chagione di questa si è che essendo io stamane a tavola Chosimo mi disse che maestro Mariotto era venuto chostà per stare techò otto dì et Chosimo dicie che tornando qua il maestro M., ch'elli si contenta ch'io venghi costà a star techò Sicchè io ti priegho che ttu lo prieghi ch'elli stia techò tanto quanto tu chè mi pare che ttu n'abbia nicissità et anche Chosimo si chontenterebbe ch'elli stesse techò et profferali che ttu lo provederaj per modo che de sarà contento Avisambi che sse delli torna che ttu rimosso ogni chagione io verrò costà ch'a niun modo io voglio che ttu stij chostì senza lui et senza me sicchè avisami di sua intenzione che ss'io l'avessi saputo quando di qui si partì non bisognava che delli pigliasse questa fatica che io sarei venuta chostà Avisami se avesti dell'acqua il dì che andasti et se vuoi nulla schrivimelo Altro non dico Xpo ti guardi. In Firenze a dì XIII di settembre MCCCXLIII.

M<sup>a</sup> CHONTESSINA DI CHOSIMO.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Addressed on the outside of letter: Giovanni di Chosimo de' Medici in Siena o al Bagno a Petriulo. (*Archivio Mediceo innanzi il Principato*, Filza 8, No. 336.)







# COSIMO DI GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI

ALBERTO AVERARDO DE' ALBERTI, *from Rome, to*  
GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI

The condition of this city thou must have heard from others, so I shall be brief. There are many splendid palaces, houses, tombs, and temples, and other edifices in infinite number, but all are in ruins ; much porphyry and marble from ancient buildings, and every day these marbles are destroyed by being burnt for lime in scandalous fashion. What is modern is poor stuff, that is to say the buildings ; the beauty of Rome lies in what is in ruin. The men of the present day, who call themselves Romans, are very different in bearing and in conduct from the ancient inhabitants. *Breviter loquendo*, they all look like cowherds. Their women are generally handsome in face ; all the rest is uncommonly dirty ; the reason, they tell me, is that they all cook. They seem agreeable, but one seldom sees them. Amusements there are none, save to go to these pardons (indulgences) which are perpetual, and in these days of Lent the women frequent them, as well as those who, like me, have nothing else to do.

*Ex Urbe delacerata* (From the ruined City), 22nd March 1443 (1444).

CONTESSINA DE' MEDICI *to her son GIOVANNI in Rome.*

Since thy departure I have no news of thee save from one who saw thee when leaving Siena, and who said thou wert well. I know not how thou hast fared, as the weather has not been favourable, but by now thou must be near Rome. I trust God has guided thee in safety ; this week has seemed to me like a year. Therefore I pray thee let me know how thou art, and whether the journey has fatigued thee. Remember above all to have care of thyself, and if thou needest aught from here let

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

me know. We are all well, thanks be to God. I say no more. God protect thee.—The 21st day of February 1444 (1445).  
MONA CONTESSINA.<sup>1</sup>

### *The Same to the Same*

To-day I received thy letter, and see that thou art well: please God to preserve thee so. It has been told me that fever has begun there as it did last summer; I pray thee if there be any danger come away, for Roman fevers are bad. Remember Bartolommeo di Nanni di Nettolo, he had enough of them: do not wait to fall ill, as Piero did at Ferrara.

I have a jar of excellent raisins, and will send it in a few days; when it arrives see that it is given to Monsignore di Capora.

Lucrezia is well, she is stouter and altogether improved; she bids me remind you of her salve. Shouldst thou need anything I can do for thee tell me. Pray to those holy relics and to the Pardons, especially to the Holy Face (*Sudario*), to give thee holiness.

Tell Riccio his people are well, and that I caused capons, spices, saffron, and comfits to be given to the women for the confinement; and Matteo, who has just come from the Mugello, says that he has sent stakes for his vineyard. No more at present: Christ guard thee.—In Florence, 20th March 1444 (1445).  
MONA CONTESSINA.<sup>2</sup>

### CONTESSINA DE' MEDICI to her son PIERO

I have thy letter asking for the rose-coloured lucco<sup>3</sup> lined with down, a jacket, and the boots. The hat I sent thee by

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza v. Avanzi, No. 274.

<sup>2</sup> *VII Lettere di Contessina Bardi nei Medici*, per nozze Zanichelli-Mariotti. Edizione di lxxv. esemplari. September 6, 1886.

<sup>3</sup> A long, loose robe, generally tied round the waist, worn by Florentine citizens in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. *Mettersi il lucco* became a common saying for putting on fine clothes.

## COSIMO DI GIOVANNI DE MEDICI

Benedetto Altoviti. The other things I will send next week. I have received the steaks, the hams and the salted meat thou hast sent. I write so shortly because the messenger is going off in haste. No more. God keep thee.—From Florence on the 11th day of April 1445.

LA CONTESSINA.<sup>1</sup>

The following is the first letter from Lucrezia, the devoted wife of Piero de' Medici (the Gouty). She was the daughter of Cosimo de' Medici's intimate friend, Francesco Tornabuoni, and must have been a remarkable woman. Cosimo had a high opinion of her ability; after his death in 1464 her husband consulted her on all political questions, and when she was absent kept her minutely informed about passing events. She corresponded with many of the literary men of her time, was no mean poetess, and many of her sacred plays and lauds were very popular. Niccolò Valori praises her rare eloquence and her translations from Holy Writ into the vulgar tongue. She was also an excellent housewife, and by her tact, goodness, and kindly manners did much to preserve the pre-eminence of the Medici. The education of her children occupied her greatly, and few princes of that day were brought up like Lorenzo and Giuliano. Lucrezia's deep religious feeling was tempered by a joyous, merry nature, which comes out in her letters, and accounts for the affection she inspired in so many and such different people. It is strange that no authentic portrait of her is known. One cannot help thinking she must be depicted in Ghirlandajo's fresco in the choir of S. Maria Novella representing the life of S. John the Baptist, which she narrated in her poem *La Vita di San Giovanni Battista*. The more so that the fresco was commissioned by her brother Giovanni Tornabuoni, and contains many portraits of his family and of friends and dependants of the Medici. It is true it was painted a few years after her death, still her image cannot have faded so rapidly from recollection.

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza ix. No. 262.

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

LUCREZIA DE' MEDICI, *at the Baths of Petriolo, to her husband PIERO at Florence*

LORD AND MASTER MINE,—Yesterday I had a letter from thee advising me what to do about the baths. I had already settled to do all thou sayest in thy letter and whatever Maestro Giovanni orders; nothing will seem fatiguing or irksome to me for regaining my health, which I believe by the grace of God will improve, so I think you will all be well pleased.

I see thou hast purged thyself and art going to the villa, of which I am glad; be careful to keep well and do not give way to melancholy, for I shall return cured and do honour to Maestro Giovanni, to whom I show much attention, for he deserves it.

If thy coming here can be done without fatigue and with pleasure to thyself it would be a great joy to me, but if troublesome and fatiguing to thee, do not come. I am glad Bianca Maria has recovered; how I pray to God that she may continue well as thou, I, and her husband desire, I leave thee to imagine. To Mona Nanna and to Filippo I have given greetings and they commend themselves to thee and to all; commend me to Cosimo, to Mona Contessina, Mona Ginevra, and Giovanni, and salute Pier Francesco and kiss Bianca Maria from me. Christ guard us.—In Petriolo, May 17, 1446.

If without trouble and it pleases thee, thou canst spare Franceschino for the remaining time I am here, I should be very glad, as he is most useful to me in this place, but whatever pleases thee pleases me.<sup>1</sup>

CONTESSINA DE' MEDICI *to her son PIERO at Trebbio*

I send thee a quarter of a roe, a hare and a kid, so shall not send any veal. I understand thy letter and also trust

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza xvi. No. 30.





Per avisi ho da Napoli il Re persevera pure in molestare assai le cose mie et in non mi lasciare riscuotere et volere che io paghi dubito ancora che subito che 'l papa intenderà questi cenni di levare la obedi- enza non faccia qualche novità alle mie cose a Roma nelle quali benchè mi paia avere passato il pericolo maggiore pure havendo grandissima fidanza costì per ogni mio bisogno vorrei che con ogni cautela e buono modo et segretamente che non lo intendessi altri che Messer Cecho intendessi se a qualche mio bisogno mi porrei valere di costì di XXXm o XLm ducati per VI overo VIIj mesi benchè non credo haverne bisogno perchè come dico mi pare in questa parte havere avuto il male ch'io possi et insino a hora ho provveduto francamente pure a mia satis- factione vorrei intendessi questo benchè mi pare essere certo non mi habbi a essere dinegato fate d' intenderlo et avisatemenè subito govern- andola con quella cautela et segreto che merita il caso e la fede che ho in voi ho costì Antonio e cotesti portinari et niente di meno non do questo aviso se non a voi solo et ho scritta questa di mia mano per non mi fidare d'altri, vorrei come dico intendessi questa parte da messer Cecho senza che o voi o lui ne conferissi con altri havendo tante diverse persecutioni harò tanto maggiore animo a resistere gagliardamente quando sarò certo questo favore non mi habbi a mancare costì bisog- nandomi aoperarli farò quelle cautioni et obligationi che saranno di bisogno. In Firenze a dì XXV di luglio 1478.

Vostro LORENZO DE' MEDICI.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The address on outside of sheet is: Magnifico Hieronimo Morelli, Oratori florentino, patri meo. (*Arch. Med. ante Principatum*, Filza 124, No. 2.)

+ De mēdie illi 134 m. p. 146

Die 134 m. p. 146 m. p. et lib. v. m. p. p. quella gausi del  
governo mio i torno a faly del b. n. gno ero d. l. b. c. h. e. t. o. f. u. r. t. a. n. t. a.  
quanto m. a. n. i. s. s. i. g. i. a. l. e. t. a. t. i. a. et quanto p. g. u. e. s. t. r. o. p. r. o. u. e. n. i. n. g.  
g. i. f. a. r. a. n. c. o. r. d. a. t. o. et m. o. n. i. p. r. e. n. i. f. u. t. i. d. a. m. e. d. l. a. g. o. m. l. a. n. e. s. c. h. o. s. t.  
p. l. e. s. a. n. t. a. l. a. q. u. a. l. e. c. r. e. d. o. g. r. a. t. i. a. v. i. d. i. o. c. h. e. m. e. r. e. c. i. f. e. g. u. e.  
r. e. p. m. o. s. t. o. c. h. e. c. r. e. d. o. c. h. e. t. u. r. i. n. e. l. a. r. e. t. e. b. e. n. e. d. i. c. t. i. o. n. i. s. t. i.

De g. o. t. i. s. p. i. r. i. t. a. t. o. et b. a. r. t. e. n. e. i. v. i. l. l. a. c. h. e. m. y. p. i. a. c. e. et c. o. n. f. o. r. t. a. t. i. o.  
a. f. t. o. r. e. f. i. n. o. et n. o. t. i. d. e. r. e. g. a. m. c. h. o. n. i. c. i. c. h. e. t. o. r. n. e. r. o. p. u. a. m. b. a.  
a. l. e. m. e. s. t. r. o. g. r. a. m. m. y. f. a. r. e. m. o. c. h. a. r. e. e. b. i. c. o. n. a. c. h. o. i. s. t. a. g. n. i. c. a.  
p. s. c. h. e. l. l. e. m. e. m. b. r. a.

De b. e. n. e. d. i. c. t. i. o. n. i. s. c. l. a. m. c. o. n. t. a. c. t. u. s. et c. o. n. t. e. n. t. i. m. e. n. t. i. s. t. e.  
De a. r. t. e. m. a. g. i. c. a. g. o. l. d. e. n. t. i. s. d. i. l. l. i. g. e. n. t. i. s. p. e. n. c. h. o. t. i. m. i. l. l. a. c. h. e. m. y. p. i. a. c. e.  
p. i. a. c. e. m. i. l. l. a. b. i. n. d. a. m. a. n. i. s. t. i. s. t. a. m. et g. r. a. t. i. a. p. r. e. g. i. n. o. p. l. e. b. e. r. y.  
c. o. m. e. i. l. d. r. o. n. i. s. t. i. m. e. n. t. i. s. t. a. m. et c. l. a. m. c. o. n. t. a. c. t. u. s. et c. o. n. t. e. n. t. i. s. t. e.

De a. r. t. e. m. a. g. i. c. a. g. o. l. d. e. n. t. i. s. d. i. l. l. i. g. e. n. t. i. s. p. e. n. c. h. o. t. i. m. i. l. l. a. c. h. e. m. y. p. i. a. c. e.  
c. o. m. e. i. l. d. r. o. n. i. s. t. i. m. e. n. t. i. s. t. a. m. et c. l. a. m. c. o. n. t. a. c. t. u. s. et c. o. n. t. e. n. t. i. s. t. e.  
De a. r. t. e. m. a. g. i. c. a. g. o. l. d. e. n. t. i. s. d. i. l. l. i. g. e. n. t. i. s. p. e. n. c. h. o. t. i. m. i. l. l. a. c. h. e. m. y. p. i. a. c. e.  
c. o. m. e. i. l. d. r. o. n. i. s. t. i. m. e. n. t. i. s. t. a. m. et c. l. a. m. c. o. n. t. a. c. t. u. s. et c. o. n. t. e. n. t. i. s. t. e.

De a. r. t. e. m. a. g. i. c. a. g. o. l. d. e. n. t. i. s. d. i. l. l. i. g. e. n. t. i. s. p. e. n. c. h. o. t. i. m. i. l. l. a. c. h. e. m. y. p. i. a. c. e.  
c. o. m. e. i. l. d. r. o. n. i. s. t. i. m. e. n. t. i. s. t. a. m. et c. l. a. m. c. o. n. t. a. c. t. u. s. et c. o. n. t. e. n. t. i. s. t. e.  
De a. r. t. e. m. a. g. i. c. a. g. o. l. d. e. n. t. i. s. d. i. l. l. i. g. e. n. t. i. s. p. e. n. c. h. o. t. i. m. i. l. l. a. c. h. e. m. y. p. i. a. c. e.  
c. o. m. e. i. l. d. r. o. n. i. s. t. i. m. e. n. t. i. s. t. a. m. et c. l. a. m. c. o. n. t. a. c. t. u. s. et c. o. n. t. e. n. t. i. s. t. e.

p. l. e. s. a. n. t. a. l. a. q. u. a. l. e. c. r. e. d. o. g. r. a. t. i. a. v. i. d. i. o. c. h. e. m. e. r. e. c. i. f. e. g. u. e.  
r. e. p. m. o. s. t. o. c. h. e. c. r. e. d. o. c. h. e. t. u. r. i. n. e. l. a. r. e. t. e. b. e. n. e. d. i. c. t. i. o. n. i. s. t. i.



## COSIMO DI GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI

that God will bestow this grace upon us, and I send thee capers. Giovanni<sup>1</sup> wanted to go at all hazards to-day to see Lucrezia and the children: he says too that he has hardly seen thee. With difficulty I prevented him so that he might not be over-tired. Tell Lucrezia that the child's frock shall be re-lined and she shall have it on Monday, and that she must encourage the baby to suck and have a care of all the children. Cosimo is well: this morning his knee pained him a little, a touch of the gout; but it will soon pass, as it is but a slight thing. If Lucrezia or thou shouldst want anything let me know. No more. Christ guard thee.—In Florence on the 6th day of February 1449 (1450).

MONA CONTESSINA in Florence.”<sup>2</sup>

### CONTESSINA DE' MEDICI *to her son GIOVANNI* *in Rome*

MOST DEAR SON,—As there was no need I have not written since thy departure. Now it seems to me necessary, because we hear the plague is causing many deaths, even among the well-to-do. I must beg thee for God's sake and for the sake of the love I bear thee to return as soon as thou canst. Thou knowest how anxious Cosimo and I are about thy stay in Rome; thy brother also is anxious. Had Cosimo known that plague was there he would never have let thee go. Cosimo has perpetual fever as he had when thou didst leave him, and these doctors call gout fever, and have done so for some time as thou knowest, and one can never be sure what may happen from one day to another. Therefore I beseech thee to return as quickly as thou canst, for thou art well aware how much he has to do. More I will not write to-day. Piero and his family have gone to Careggi because he also has fever. Tell me how thy ailment is? I will add no more.—In Florence 24th February 1449 (1450).

From thy

MONA CONTESSINA DI' COSIMO.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Her younger son.

<sup>2</sup> VII. *Lettere, &c.*, *op. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

# LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

COSIMO DE' MEDICI to GIOVANNI *his son in Rome*

With my own hand I wrote thee a letter on the 21st: since then I have had two letters from thee announcing thy safe arrival, and that thou art trying to obtain the indulgences in order to come away. I advise thee to do so with all possible speed, for although thou sayest that the death of the Bishop of Volterra has not changed matters, other letters I have seen declare the contrary; a prolonged stay is therefore not advisable.

The affectionate manner in which our Holy Father received thee, and what thou sayest as to the love he bears us, is most grateful to me. I see by his reply that thou hast told him what I said, that we are not idle and will do all we can to persuade them to follow the counsels of His Holiness. But it will be difficult, because if either party thinks to gain anything he will not abide by the agreement. What the Venetians want and what the Count wants is of such importance to them that nothing else will be regarded as of any moment. We have sent Messer A. and are leaving no means untried to reconcile them, as we know how important it is to our city.

Messer Agniolo Simonetto and Messer N. Arimboldi sent to the King by the Count with powers to sign the compact will have arrived; I know not what is thought of it there, but we shall soon hear the truth.

From Lombardy letters have come from the Count of the 19th, dated from Vimercato. He reports that with his whole force he is there and at Melzi and Casciano and other places near by, and that Milan is so surrounded that no supplies can enter. The Venetian troops are encamped in the positions he held at first, and one sees that both armies are suffering much discomfort. Any attempt to revictual Milan must be made by ascending from the heights into the plain and passing by the places held by the Count, when there would be fighting. They say Milan is in dire straits. Other news there are none, and

## COSIMO DI GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI

we know not what is said there. Innocenzio Cotta has taken the town and fortress of S. Calombano for the Count, which it seems is a place of importance. Nothing more is said about our peace with the King, and to my sorrow there is a coolness about sending ambassadors. Pray God it may be for the best.

I see Messer Giovanni di Nerone is to have the bishopric of Volterra; I hope he may do well. If Messer Carlo<sup>1</sup> gets the Parish Church<sup>2</sup> I do not mind. I did not wish to ask for the canonry of Messer Giovanni which is in the gift of the Consuls, as many citizens wanted it. With this I send thee a letter from Messer Giovanni Migliorati received to-day. Thou wilt see what he writes. If this be true, and it can be had for Messer Carlo, it would be well. If thou thinkest it might be of use, speak to His Holiness about it and try to obtain a conditional promise, I would then let thee know at once if the event occurs: for our Holy Father shows us such affection that it seems to me unwise not to ask if one can get anything. No more at present. Christ guard thee.—In Florence on the last day of February 1449 (1450). COSIMO DE' MEDICI.<sup>3</sup>

### CONTESSINA DE' MEDICI to GIOVANNI *her son* *at Volterra*

In the name of God on the 18th day of December 1450.

Yesterday I had a letter from thee. The things thou wantest shall all be sent by the first man going to Volterra. Cosimo continues to improve; he has not been very ill this time, although the fever has not yet left him, but it is slight. Thy shoes were ready, but they have made them black, so others must be made, and I will send them by the first messenger. We have not yet heard of the arrival of our party, but one who met them on the road says they were well:

<sup>1</sup> Cosimo's illegitimate son by a slave-girl.

<sup>2</sup> "Pieve," chief church of a parish, and the only one where baptisms took place.

<sup>3</sup> *Cosmi Vita*, op. cit. ii. 194.



## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

as soon as I hear I will let thee know. Although I told thee we paid too much for the pigs, I want thee to send us a pig or a roe for Christmas, if they are offered to thee; if we have to buy them we will not have them. Messer Rosello writes that he is coming to pass Christmas with me, and has sent Cosimo a fine cloak of Polish fashion of marten and sable, a pair of gloves, and the tooth of a fish a foot and a half long. As we have to prepare for the festival of the Three Kings, they will make a little change from my cloth of gold.

The plague affects us but little. For three days out of four during the week no one mentions it, they are all people one does not know. I should be so glad to know how thou art, and whether thou art better or worse since thy departure. Thy return, when it takes place, will be a great joy to me.

Antonio degl' Strozzi has been to see me, and pestered me much about that business: he wants to come here for Christmas, tell him what thou thinkest; and so be he says that I promised him anything do not believe it, for he could learn nothing from me: so be cautious how thou dealest with him.

Tell the women I do not write because there is a dearth of writers until Mateo returns from Rome, he ought to be here to-morrow. Salute them from me, and say many things, and caress the children and kiss them for love of me; if the women want anything I can send, tell me. No more at present. God guard thee.

MONA CONTESSINA in Florence.<sup>1</sup>

CONTESSINA DE' MEDICI to her son GIOVANNI  
at Volterra

In the name of God on the 3rd day of January 1450 (1451).

MOST DEAR SON,—I only write this because for several days I have not had a letter, and because I thought Antonio degl' Strozzi was coming back, and from him I might have

<sup>1</sup> VII. *Lettere*, &c., *op. cit.*

## COSIMO DI GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI

heard news of thee. But Michele has been here, and says that since Friday thou hast been expecting the party from Rome. So I write to tell thee that it is impossible they could arrive because they were expected at Siena that evening. By now they ought to be with thee; if they are do not fail to tell us how they fare, for Roberto wrote to Cosimo that they left last Friday. If they come here we shall send thee word. No more at present. Christ protect thee. Written in haste.

MONA CONTESSINA in Florence.<sup>1</sup>

### *The Same to the Same*

In the name of God on the 5th day of January 1450 (1451).

The other day I wrote to thee in haste, and have now heard of the arrival of Piero and Pier Francesco.<sup>2</sup> God be praised. We shall be much rejoiced if they have returned in good health: I hear Piero's foot has given him some trouble. I know not what thou hast decided about staying or returning; if thou dost return here put all thy belongings together in one place, so that if they are wanted thou wilt not be obliged to ask those women to find them, and so drive them crazy. I think Cosimo has written to thee about the strong box he wants. Here the plague has ceased, and I am glad thou art coming back; although it might be well to stay a little longer and see how thy health goes, but thou canst always return there if necessary. Tell me thy decision. I wrote the day before yesterday to ask thee to search in the cupboard in my room there for a pair of scissors which belong to Cosimo and to bring them, or they can be put into the strong box. No more to-day. Salute Pier Francesco from me, and tell him he is welcome back, and that I long to see him. Christ guard thee.

MONA CONTESSINA in Florence.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> VII. *Lettere*, &c., *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Only son of Lorenzo de' Medici, Cosimo's brother, who was dead.

<sup>3</sup> VII. *Lettere*, &c., *op. cit.*

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

When, after the death of Visconti, Francesco Sforza had attained the object of his ambition and become Duke of Milan in 1450, Cosimo sent his eldest son Piero with Neri Capponi, Luca Pitti, and Diotisalvi Neroni, to salute the new duke. "They proceeded in triumph," writes Cambi, "through the Milanese territory, and all their expenses were paid. The number of horsemen was so great when they arrived within five miles of Milan that it seemed like a manœuvring ground. Then the Duke in person advanced to meet them, and embraced and kissed them. Never was greater honour paid to Florentine ambassadors."<sup>1</sup>

Piero de' Medici was also one of the citizens deputed to meet the Emperor Frederick III. on his entry into Florence in January 1451. He dismounted at the church of S. Gallo, which had been magnificently decorated with hangings of cloth of gold and silk. In his train was the poor boy-King of Hungary, Bandilagho, as Cambi writes Ladislaus, and many German princes and bishops, whose outlandish names are quite beyond the old chronicler's powers of spelling. "The Emperor seated himself," continues Cambi, "on a most splendid chair under the loggia of the church, and all the gentlemen stood round him while the Ten of the Balìa bent the knee before him on either side, representing the Magnificent Signori. Messer Carlo d'Arezzo made a speech, to which Monsignore Enea, Bishop of Siena [the celebrated Æneas Sylvius, afterwards Pope Pius II.], replied in the name of the Emperor. Then the Emperor mounted again, and the Ten of the Balìa took the bridle of his horse, and in that manner they proceeded to the fore-port of the Porta S. Gallo where the Magnificent Signori of Florence awaited him seated. The Colleges had a fine banner with the Emperor's arms, and when he came under it the Signori rose and went to his bridle, which the Ten abandoned. Mariotto Benvenuti, the Gonfalonier of Justice, took the right side and Rosso Ridolfi took the left, the other Signori with all the citizens following them, and thus they accompanied the Emperor to S. Maria Novella where the Pope's apartments had been prepared for him. The magistrates were on foot, and the others who had gone out to meet him were on horseback. It was, indeed, a splendid sight.

<sup>1</sup> *Istorie di Giovanni Cambi*, *Delizie degli Eruditi Toscani*, xx. 273.

## COSIMO DI GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI

Please God he may recognise it, and be grateful for such honours which have been so costly."<sup>1</sup>

After the sack of Constantinople in 1453 Florence became the headquarters of Greek men of learning. For fifteen years John Argyropoulos "poured forth wisdom from his golden mouth," and Demetrius Chalcondyles, Johannes Andronicus Calistus, Constantius and Johannes Lascari succeeded him. They gave a fresh impetus to the study of Platonic philosophy as opposed to that of Aristotle; even the children of the chief citizens spoke Greek with such ease and purity that Poliziano exclaims, "Athens has not been destroyed by the barbarians but has migrated to Florence." It was then that Cosimo determined to found the celebrated Platonic Academy, and selected Marsilio Ficino, the son of his physician, to preside over it, although he was little more than a boy.

The sack of Lodi gave Cosimo's opponents an opportunity to interfere in home politics. Their first step in June 1454, on the pretext that war was over, was to abolish the Balìa, which they imagined was the mainstay of his authority. This, of course, was useless as long as the Scrutiny made by the Balìa and the Accoppiatori appointed by them were still in office. In November, therefore, a new Scrutiny was made, and in January 1455 the new Signory ordered that in six months' time the power of the Accoppiatori should cease, and the Gonfalonier and the Priors be once more chosen by lot. The measure was a popular one, and it worked, not against Cosimo, but against Luca Pitti, Diotisalvi Neroni, and Agnolo Acciaiuoli, as it put an end to their power of manipulating the appointments to office. The disturbed condition of Italy after the death of Pope Nicholas the peace-lover, and the discharge by the Venetians of Jacopo Piccinino, whose standard became the rallying-point for all discontented and dissatisfied men, reacted upon Florence. A feeling of unrest was abroad. Many citizens considered the Government weak and vacillating, and were only waiting for the election of a Signory who shared their views to make an attempt to "reform" the city. But without the consent of Neri Capponi this was impossible. So things remained as they were until his death in 1457 left Cosimo with a free hand. The re-assessment of the *catasto* early in 1458 was a

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., *op. cit.*, xx. 281.

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

heavy blow to his opponents, the new register of property entailing upon them considerable loss. In their dismay they turned to Cosimo, and suggested the creation of a new Balìa, a new Scrutiny, and fresh Accoppiatori, but he refused to listen to any proposal for the renewal of the Balìa save in the usual way through the Colleges and the Councils. When Luca Pitti became Gonfalonier of Justice in 1458 he tried in vain to induce the Council to appoint a new Balìa, and Girolamo Machiavelli, a hot-headed republican who declared against all Balie as inimical to the freedom of the citizens, was arrested and tortured with others who shared his views. Luca Pitti made the most of this so-called conspiracy, and tried to set his authority against that of Cosimo. Losing patience, Cosimo said to him: "You strive towards the indefinite, I towards the definite. You plant your ladder in the air, I place mine on the earth so that I may not climb so high as to fall. It seems to me but just and natural that I should desire the honour and reputation of my house to surpass yours. Let us therefore do like two big dogs which sniff one at the other when they meet, and then, both having teeth, separate and go their ways; you to attend to your concerns, I to look after mine own." Cosimo then summoned a parliament. His position can be gauged by the advice given to Duke Sforza by his Ambassador to Florence: "When you would have one thing done rather than another, write your opinion or your desire privately to Cosimo, and he will always arrange it for you. Do not waste your time in saying, I would have their opinion, &c. . . . Popular governments are alien to and diverse from others, and Cosimo cannot be for ever in the Palace as he once was." Pope Pius II. also declared, "Nothing is denied to Cosimo. He is the arbiter of peace and of war, and the moderator of the laws. Not so much a private citizen as the lord of the country. The policy of the Republic is discussed in his house; he it is who gives commands to the magistrates. Nought of royalty is wanting to him save the name and the state of a king."

CONTESSINA DE' MEDICI to GINEVRA, *wife of her son*  
GIOVANNI, *at the Baths of Petriolo*

DEAREST DAUGHTER,—In these days I received a letter from thee and learn thou art well, which rejoices me. I see



## COSIMO DI GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI

that thou art preparing to return, it seems to me a thousand years. Piero is going there now, so leave out the things he may need, and leave Florino and Giannello and give over everything to them in case thou comest away before Piero arrives; he will need a good many days for the cure of his eczema. The curtains thou tookest away bring back to me here, for Mona Lucrezia takes mine with her, and some slaves from here, so she will need no other women. Thy boy is well and has cut two teeth, and I think will get accustomed to these wet nurses in such a way . . . <sup>1</sup> night and day we see after him. It seems to me that having cut his teeth and the evenings being warm he will do well. I say no more. May Christ guard thee.—In Florence on the 10th day of April 1455.

MONA CONTESSINA DI COSIMO.<sup>2</sup>

### COSIMO DE' MEDICI *to his son GIOVANNI* *at Milan*

During the last days I have written thee several letters, but have only had one from thee from Modena. We have heard of thy arrival at Milan, and of the great honours paid thee by the Duke, at which I am well pleased.

I expect to hear from thee how things passed.

As I told thee, and as I have written to thee, I do not at all desire that thou shouldest go further in order to accompany the Duke of Calabria. We should lose more here than we should gain there by this. Thou hast already done quite enough by accompanying him hitherto, without going any further, and next month thou must return here. No more at present. Christ guard thee.—Florence, July 28, 1455.

COSIMO DE' MEDICI.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A piece torn out of letter.

<sup>2</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza ix. No. 147.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 171.



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LUCREZIA DE' MEDICI (*from Careggi or Cafaggiuolo*)  
to her husband PIERO at Florence

This day I received thy letter, which is most dear to me as telling how thou art. I see that by the grace of God riding has not been too irksome to thee, of which I am glad. Mona Contessina told me the same, and that thou hast been received with great demonstrations of affection. Truly, as thou sayest, we have much to thank God for. So I beg thee to bear gladly a little discomfort, for these things are not accomplished without some fatigue. I see all the family is well, which is a great consolation to hear, and I thank thee. I beg that, as we are not coming there, thou wilt return as soon as thou canst, for it seems to us a thousand years since we saw thee, particularly to Giuliano. Lorenzo is learning the verses his master there gave him and then teaches them to Giuliano. No more at present. Commend me to Cosimo and to Mona Contessina. We are all well. Christ guard thee.—28th February 1457 (1458).

THY LUCREZIA.<sup>1</sup>

The entry into Florence of Galeazzo Maria, Count of Pavia, son of Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan, is described in a curious poem written in 1459 by an unknown author.<sup>2</sup> Leaving Cafaggiuolo, where the lad slept, he entered Florence on 17th April 1459, and dismounted at the Medici palace. Next day Messer Galeazzo visited the Signoria, who made him sit in their midst and offered him their services. "I thank you for your greeting," answered the young Count, "and beg you to command me and to dispose of all I possess. For you I will abandon any enterprise, and serve you against any power." Then with a prayer to God to grant them happiness and long lives the lad of fifteen added: "I beg you to pardon my youth if, from want of knowledge, I have not spoken aright in your presence ;

<sup>1</sup> *Donne Medicee avanti il principato*, Berta Felice, Rassegna Nazionale, 1907.

<sup>2</sup> *Ricordi di Firenze dell'anno 1459*, di Autore Anonimo, a cure di Guglielmo Volpi. Città di Castello, S. Lapi, MDCCCXVII.

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remember I am but a boy. I commend you to Christ our Lord." From his letters to his father we get a glimpse of the home life of Cosimo. He writes that even the ladies of the family helped to entertain him, and he was charmed with the playing of one of Piero's daughters on the "organo di cave." At a dinner at Careggi he notes that Giovanni, Cosimo's second son, did not sit at table, but acted as a kind of steward, and saw that every one was properly served. After dinner a poet improvised verses in honour of the guest. "Certes, Lucian or Dante could have done no better," he remarks. Then they danced, Piero's wife Lucrezia Tornabuoni, Giovanni's Maria Ginevra degl' Alessandri, and a daughter of the Strozzi, held to be the handsomest maiden in Florence, and some peasant girls.

Two days later came Pope Pius II. on his way to the Congress he had summoned at Mantua to arrange for another crusade. He was received with great honour, and young Sforza made an oration, kneeling in the dust before the Pope. Then Pius seated himself on a gestatory chair and was borne into the city on the shoulders of the lords of Faenza, Rimini, Carpi, and Forli, instead of riding on a mule, which was the usual practice. "This," observes Cambi, "was a proof of pride, not of holiness." The old chronicler then describes a tournament in the Piazza S. Croce "for the temporal lords, but many ecclesiastics also went. And on 29th April there was a ball in the Mercato Nuovo, which was enclosed with a stockade surrounded by seats covered with tapestry. Sixty young Florentine gentlemen, who were expert dancers, richly adorned with pearls and jewels, and many pretty maidens and girls who were good dancers, danced; and they changed their dresses several times. All the ambassadors were there and some of the cardinals, and it was calculated that in the seats, in the houses round, and on foot, there were more than 60,000 persons. There was also a great hunt in the Piazza de' Signori, which was closed all round with a stockade, and inside were turned loose two lions, two horses, four bulls, two young buffaloes, a cow and a calf, a wild boar, a giraffe, with twenty men and a large ball of wood, so made that a man could stand upright inside and roll it about in order to exasperate the animals. But the loud shouts of the people so frightened the lions that they were as though stupefied, many men broke into the enclosure and the

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lions were as lambs among them. The preparations had great, and the expense large, but the pleasure given was sm

### CONTESSINA DE' MEDICI to her son PIERO at Venice

DEAREST SON,—This day I have received thy letter s that thou art well and improving every day, which rejoice I think thou must wish for news of Cosimo. Some days a had a bad attack of plague. He is ill in bed, but this tir has escaped and now the fever is slight. I hear that thou bought the quilts and the ticking, which is well done. If wouldst like to send them to Careggi, I [will keep them]<sup>2</sup> thy return. Do as thou wilt. The other family is quite It seems to me a thousand years until thy return, and I he rumour of it; I do not know how long thy absence will which is a grief to me. I say no more at present. May guard thee.—In Florence on the 21st day June 1459.

MONA CONTESSINA."

### COSIMO DE' MEDICI to his son GIOVANNI at the Baths of Petriolo

The men who brought back the horses gave us thy le and told us of thy safe arrival, thanks be to God. have heard nothing from thee since, nor how the baths : with thee; we should be glad to have news often from th say how thou art, so do not omit to cause some one to often. Here by the grace of God we are all very well and preparing a fine feast at Careggi for the day of S. Cosimo. three days we expect Guglielmo de' Pazzi,<sup>4</sup> for Lorenzo gone with his tutor to Cafaggiuolo, where he was expe Be diligent in doing all that is necessary, and come bac

<sup>1</sup> *Istorie di Giovanni Cambi.*

<sup>2</sup> A piece of the letter is torn out

<sup>3</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza xvii. No. 124.

<sup>4</sup> Husband of Bianca de' Medici, Piero's daughter.

## COSIMO DI GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI

soon as thou canst. Be not remiss in what thou art there for, and be careful to take thy baths properly, so that they may be beneficial. Christ guard thee.—Careggi, September 1459.

COSIMO DE' MEDICI.<sup>1</sup>

CONTESSINA DE' MEDICI *to her son GIOVANNI and his wife GINEVRA at Bagno a Morba*

DEAREST CHILDREN,—We have received your letters, which have given us great pleasure and relief, seeing that thou art better and that the improvement continues; may it please God that it shall continue, in order to give these two old people joy and consolation whilst they still live. It has been reported to thee that Cosimo and Piero have been ill; this annoys me, for I did not wish anything to sadden thee, so that the baths might have their proper effect. Their illness was but slight. Cosimo had a cold, which was soon cured, and he is now well; Piero had some pain, which is not yet gone; but you both know what always happens, so he will soon be well also. Cosimo has put an end to the worry of being one of the Eight, and Pier Francesco has been named in his stead: this might also be done for thee. I should be glad, Ginevra, to hear from thee how the baths act and how Mona Nanna serves thee. If I can do aught for thee here, tell me. Mona Pippa has the ailment thou knowest of, the others of thy party are well.—At Careggi on the 28th day of August 1460. THY CONTESSINA.<sup>2</sup>

The last few years of Cosimo's life were clouded by ill-health and suffering, and the knowledge that the growing arrogance and rapacity of his party, the Palleschi, were to a great extent alienating the affection and the esteem of the citizens from his house. Then the death in 1461 of Cosimino, the only child of Giovanni and Ginevra de' Medici, was a bitter grief to his grandparents, whose especial pet the little boy had been. Two years later Giovanni himself died, and the old man

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza ix. No. 509.

<sup>2</sup> *VII. Lettere*, op. cit.

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sadly exclaimed that the palace in Via Larga was now far too large for so small a family. He had always counted on the help Giovanni would give to his elder brother Piero, who was crippled with gout, and his death at the early age of forty was a blow from which Cosimo never rallied.

### POPE PIUS II. to COSIMO DE' MEDICI

BELOVED SON,—Peace and apostolic blessing. The news we have just received of the death of your son, Giovanni of blessed memory, has grieved us deeply, not only because it is so untimely, but also because we fear it is likely to prove hurtful to a man of your age and infirmity. Yours is a life that should be prolonged in the sweetness of the Spirit, and you ought at all times to find comfort. Our own consolation is that you are wise, that you are well versed in the chances of fortune, and able to hold your feelings in restraint. We urge you, Cosimo, to do this, and looking towards God, to bless Him and to trust that all is for the best. We are ignorant of our secrets; He alone knows our needs and our true advantage. Let us then have faith that we and your son have been blessed with in gentleness, for neither you nor he could foresee the future. We look to your lofty nature, my son, to continue bearing affliction with will in this with patience, even as we hear you do bear it, without giving way to grief. Mourning accords not with your age; it is contrary to your health, and we ourselves, your native land and all Italy, require that your life should be as far as possible prolonged. Let good works and acts of piety be your tribute to your son's memory. Anything else would be inconsistent with your nature; deeds of charity, devotion, and prayer are their reward. This brief letter is written to acquaint you with our grief, and to assure you of our solicitude. Let these few words be counted for our affection.—Given at S. Peter's, in Rome, under the ring of the Fisherman, on the 1st day of November 1463, in the 6th year of our pontificate.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Cosmi Vita*, op. cit. ii. 234.



# COSIMO DI GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI

COSIMO DE' MEDICI to POPE PIUS II.

MOST BLESSED FATHER,—The power and wisdom of the words you wrote made me feel, while I read them, that I was veritably listening to the consoling voice of Him whose true Vicar you are. Nothing more sweet, nothing more saintly, or even divine, could have been written. And your consolation had this effect : I have always thought it expedient and praiseworthy to control (for I could not quench) my grief ; but now, most blessed Father, to act contrary to your advice would seem to me positively sinful. I therefore strive to the best of my power, and so far as my weak spirit will permit, to bear this great calamity with calmness. To me it appeared a calamity ; but God alone knows what is truly a misfortune, and we, as you write so wisely and devoutly, are ignorant of it. Yet I never thought it was not well with my son Giovanni, for I remembered that he had gone forth, not from life, but into life from death. For this, which we call life, is death, and that is the true life which is everlasting. And I recognised that the only suffering his death brought with it was ours, who truly must needs miss him. Yet we know not for what to pray. I trust that God in the abundance of His mercy will pity us that are left behind ; for the Lord is gentle and full of mercy. But for my own life, I count it happy, because the Supreme Pontiff, the Vicar of Christ, has been thoughtful on its account. I will indeed take care of it ; but not for the reasons which you, in your more than human kindness, have put forward. For what is my power now worth ? What worth has it ever had ? Nay, my purpose in caring for my life is that I may be found not to have despised this precious gift of God, nor to have forgotten the mercies which I have received from the divine love. I ask of you, most blessed Father, that your Holiness offer a prayer for me, your son, to God, that I may have strength to achieve this.—[1463].<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Cosmi Vita*, op. cit. ii. 235.



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On 3rd November 1463 Pius II. wrote again to Cosimo asking him to induce Florence to aid him, by equipping two galleys for his projected crusade against the Turks. Cosimo's answer is most respectful and very wary.

### COSIMO DE' MEDICI to PIUS II.

Cosimo greets the Supreme Pontiff.

MOST BLESSED FATHER,—I received your Holiness' letter a few days ago, a letter full of grandeur and dignity, and wisdom, as no one can doubt, could have proceeded from but your Holiness. Me, at any rate, it so affected that reading it several times I became convinced that such a letter was beyond the common use of men, and was indeed other than what might seem to be written at the dictation of that truly divine Spirit which spoke in the saints of old. When you speak of the insecurity of man's lot, who would straightway be moved by the power of your eloquence to despise all that is human? And when you solemnly tell us of our immortal life to come, can any be so dull and leaden as he would not feel exalted, as he reads, so as to gain a vision even here, of the glory of his own immortality and be inspired by a wonderful longing to attain it? And your deeds are less holy than your words. I say nothing of what you have achieved in the past, saintly though it is and worthy of our remembrance. But with regard to the enterprise which you are now preparing, is it possible, most blessed Father, to be so bold that you, who are Christ's Vicar, are attempting it without the presence within you of Him whose representative you are? The task is one so novel and so marvellous, that without His impulse and support to your age and infirmity the undertaking would seem doomed to fail. That I suppose is the reason why some people regard it, as you say in your letter, with amazement and disapproval. But I ask you, most blessed Father, whether it is not indeed a matter for wonder that a man like you, who

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years and feeble health make their own claim to a life of ease and repose, should embark on the exertions of travel and all the hardships of war. It is natural, then, that the well-wishers of the Christian Commonwealth, the friends of peace in Italy, and all who desire the true and righteous tranquillity of kingdoms and the permanence of the Christian sway, should behold these difficulties and dangers with dread. They look upon your virtue as a gift clearly sent by God for the healing of human ills; they love the Roman Church and care for the integrity and happiness of Christendom; and they regard your safety as their security for all these. It must needs be that they are alarmed by your undertaking such difficulties and your exposure to such dangers, seeing that they do not possess your wisdom nor are they supported by the divine breath which inspires you. But though they do not see that which is before the eyes of your greater wisdom, perhaps since they wish only for what may be best for you and most beneficial for your flock, they do not deserve so much blame for disapproving an enterprise which to their limited apprehension appears so great and so difficult. You, most blessed Father, whom God will guide to victory even as He has brought you thus far, will persevere in spite of it all. Nor will the faith of Peter whose seat you occupy fail you. The end of this undertaking, which you begin so splendidly, will be to the glory of God and the joy and felicity of all that are yours, even though its initial stage be difficult and laborious. Behold the faithful shepherd offers his life for his sheep.

I now come to the summons which you address to me and the invitation to join you in this beneficent and glorious enterprise. There you write to me not as a private man who is satisfied with the mediocre dignity of a citizen, but as though I were a reigning prince, and your exhortation is so kind that I find myself unable to thank you as I would wish. For though all through my life God's kindness and bounty has showered upon me much more of human goods than I ever deserved,

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whereof you most eloquently adduce examples, yet by the grace of Him who is the giver of all that is good, I have never been oblivious of my humble lot. You, however, most blessed Father, in your superhuman kindness write to me in terms of moderation and in the form of a request, whereas it would be your right to urge, nay to command.

But the things you ask of me, most blessed Father, are not of the same nature; as to the first, to procure you a vote of assistance from our city, well you know how limited is the power of a private citizen in a free state under popular government. Nevertheless I am ready to exert my influence, such as it is, in this direction, and will do so to the best of my ability, even as I have done hitherto; I will try to arrange that your interests should be consulted, for your interests are ours and those of the common cause of all Christians. This city of ours has never yet remained behind in any glorious undertaking; but has often by her own choice taken upon herself enormous expenses, difficulties, and dangers, for the defence and dignity of the Roman Pontiff. Therefore I do not believe that she will now hold aloof when you summon her to take part in this enterprise which is pious and necessary and to the common interest of us all.

Personally, from my own resources I can promise you something more definite; that is to say I promise you, not indeed to equip two galleys (which would be an undertaking for a prince not for a private man), but to assist you so far as the limitations of my resources permit. I am not the man to imagine that the gifts of fortune which I possess are the deserved rewards of my business forethought, or of any virtue on my part, or that I have gained them by my human work or my industry, no, I am convinced they are but the gifts of a most bountiful God. If God, who is Himself the giver of all good things, either now or at any other time claims any part of it back, I should deserve to be deemed most ungrateful and impious if I grudged to return what He gave ungrudgingly;

## COSIMO DI GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI

but especially now, when such a reward is promised me, which he, who in truth can loose and bind, puts before me.

Be bold therefore, most blessed Father, in the cause of Christendom, persevere with energy and confidence, and bring the matter to an end. Be convinced, since God inspires you, that opportune assistance will not be wanting. And at last, when you have scattered the barbarous foes of the Christian name, when your sheep are defended and their fold protected, not only will mankind ever remember to honour in you the father and the shepherd, but when in the end God recalls you to His heaven, whence you have now been sent down as His Vicar, you will live in unceasing heavenly joy, having as it were gloriously served your term of divine office.<sup>1</sup>

Lucrezia was as anxious about the physical well-being of her children as about their education. Some months before Cosimo died she was at Pisa with Giuliano, who was ill, and she writes to her husband :

### LUCREZIA DE' MEDICI *to her husband* PIERO

I write thee several letters on the same day so that should one go astray thou wilt have news of Giuliano as thou desirest, by any one going there. Yesterday I wrote that as he was better I did not think the change suggested by Messer Mariotti was necessary, and last night I told thee the fever had returned as usual. My last letter was written at seven. After that he did not rest so quietly as on other nights, and he seems to me more uneasy than he should be now that the fever has diminished. I wish thee to know every small change so that thou canst the better judge what Maestro Mariotto writes ; and act, not according to my ideas, but as thou thinkest best after reading our reports. His pulse is good, all functions are natural. The fever has returned almost as strong as on the fourteenth day,

<sup>1</sup> *Cosmi Vita*, op. cit. ii. 243.

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and has lowered but little. He is not so lively during the day as I could wish, being weakened by the strength of the fever. The Maestro says this is caused by the nature of the phlegm which is in him. I wish thee to know this.

But do not be anxious, for Giuliano is strong; he walks about the room, and, though pale, is of good complexion. I give thee all these details more for thy information than because Giuliano seems to me ill, or that the amelioration does not continue. I commend myself to thee.—The 24th November 1463 at the 16th hour.

THY LUCREZIA at Pisa.

At this moment Giuliano is awake, and the Maestro says he has never found him so free from fever, and that during convalescence people are always more uneasy. Dost thou understand? <sup>1</sup>

COSIMO DE' MEDICI *to his son PIERO at Pisa*

Yesterday we received yours of the 19th, by which we see you are all well. This is most pleasing to us, also that the town is healthy and that you are taking good care of Giuliano who is well. Again we beg of you to see that he takes care of himself. We have also received the letters from Bruges and all my other letters which you had, all shall be answered.

I note that you will write to Niccolò in a few days, when the farm of Piero da Gagliano will be taken over. The sooner this is done the better, as the creditors have begun to get restless, that is Giovanni Rucie . . . <sup>2</sup> to whom I have notified that he is to stop proceedings, as he will be paid before the end of the month.

The plague here has abated, and no one mentions it any longer. The cold weather with snow and ice in these last days has put an end to it, so for the present we are all well. Day

<sup>1</sup> *Lucrezia Tornabuoni, Donna di Piero di Cosimo de' Medici*, G. Levantini-Firenze, p. 37. Firenze, 1888.

<sup>2</sup> A piece torn out of the letter.



## COSIMO DI GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI

by day you shall have news how things go. Yester evening it began to rain, and is much milder.

By the grace of God Contessina and I are very well, and so are Bianca and Guglielmo and the little Contessina. They come to us often to keep us company. To-morrow morning we shall get a letter from the Signori here to the Consuls [of the Sea]<sup>1</sup> at Pisa, in order that you may cut the wood for the galleys that are to be built. This is a favourable moon for felling trees.

Ruberto is dangerously ill, there is small hope of his recovery. God help him. For this reason none of his brothers can go to help about the wood for the galleys.

Thy companions here will write and send their letters by a horseman and . . .<sup>2</sup> We do this so that you may have frequent news. Christ guard thee.—Florence, January 23, 1463 (1464).  
COSIMO DE' MEDICI.<sup>3</sup>

The following document shows that Francesco Sforza realised how much he owed to Cosimo de' Medici. When on the death of Filippo Maria Visconti in 1447 Milan declared herself a Republic, popular feeling in Florence ran high in her favour. It needed all Cosimo's authority and influence to induce his fellow-citizens to assist Sforza in seizing supreme power. Cosimo saw that as a republic Milan would inevitably fall a prey to Venice, and thus the communications of Italy with the North would be cut off. A strong ruler who owed his crown to Florence would be an invaluable ally, and preserve the balance of power in Italy. We shall see that Piero faithfully carried out his father's policy.

### FRANCESCO SFORZA, *Duke of Milan, &c. &c.*

As we have always felt a particular affection for the magnificent Cosimo de' Medici of Florence on account of his

<sup>1</sup> For an account of the Consuls of the Sea, see *Pisa*, "Mediæval Towns," Dent, London, 1909.

<sup>2</sup> A piece torn out of the letter.

<sup>3</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza ii. No. 546.



## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

singular virtues, and as he also has loved us and all that pertains to us, we are bound and obliged to love all that belongs to him. Now here in Milan Pigello Portinaro, a Florentine citizen and merchant, the administrator and partner in the business and bank of the Magnificent Cosimo de' Medici and of Piero and Johanni his sons in Milan, who has served us and the illustrious Madonna Bianca our consort ever since he came to inhabit this our city, about eleven years ago, with very large sums of money, with stuffs and with jewels, and with loans of divers kinds as appear by the entries in our private books. These services, subsidies, and favours given by the said Pigello according to the orders of the aforesaid Magnificent Cosimo and his sons were most pleasing and acceptable to us because they were given willingly, and the said Pigello carried them out and fulfilled them with great diligence, loyalty, and love towards us, and with admirable discretion, by which means we were enabled to arrange our affairs. Pigello made every effort to do this with the smallest possible loss to us, and we are sure he will continue to do so. Therefore we are much pleased and have been well served by the aforesaid Pigello; and all the profit, lucre, and gain that the said Pigello has made, either in their name or in his own with us and with our stewards, officials, and any other agents of ours, we for the above-named reasons approve of and are well content. By this our letter we declare that they can have and hold all without fear of contradiction or qualms of conscience, releasing and absolving the said Magnificent Cosimo, his sons and the said Pigello, and their sons and heirs in perpetuity from any claims; promising for ourselves, our sons and successors, that no question shall be raised about any profits or gains they may have made with us up to the present day for the above said reasons, or for any depending or arising therefrom. Because as has been said we have already, and by this our letter we do now make a general donation of the aforesaid privileges which is formal and binding, and is to be understood as including all those

## COSIMO DI GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI

clauses and formalities which are necessary in a full and valid donation *de jure*; with the reservation that if any error is discovered in the books, writing, or reasons above said, they are to be corrected and amended in honest and just fashion; and this is to be understood as binding upon both parties. We command all our governors, clerks of the exchequer, and all other our officials and subjects who see the present letter, to observe it implicitly without contradiction or exception. And that all who see this letter may know that it is written by our own orders, we have signed it with our own hand, and had it sealed with the seal we always use.—Given in Milan on the 11th day of March 1463 (1464).

FRANCISCHUS SFORTIA,  
*Vicecomis, &c., manu propria.*  
*Cicchus.*<sup>1</sup>

The last months of Cosimo's life were passed chiefly at Careggi, and his great solace was in study, as the following letter shows :

COSIMO DE' MEDICI *to the* REVEREND MASTER MARSILIO  
FICINO, *Platonist*

Yesterday I came to the villa of Careggi, not to cultivate my fields but my soul. Come to us, Marsilio, as soon as possible. Bring with thee our Plato's book *De Summo Bono*. This, I suppose, you have already translated from the Greek language into Latin as you promised. I desire nothing so much as to know the best road to happiness. Farewell, and do not come without the Orphean lyre.

About twenty days before his death, whilst talking to Ficino, Cosimo bewailed the unhappy lot of humanity and exulted in the happier prospect he felt was opening out before him. Ficino replied by citing corresponding ideas from Greek

<sup>1</sup> *Cosmi Vita*, op. cit. ii. 246.

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

authors, particularly from Zenocrates, upon which Cosimo demanded of Ficino, as a last service, to translate his treatise on Death into Latin. The end was fast approaching, and Cosimo's calm, rather ironical nature was not changed by physical suffering or by the fear of death. When his wife asked him why he remained silent for so many hours at a time, he answered: "When we go to the villa the preparations for our departure occupy thee for fifteen days; dost thou not understand that I, who am leaving this life for the next one, have much to think on?"

A few days before Cosimo died Piero wrote to his two sons Lorenzo and Giuliano at Cafaggiuolo, where they had been sent with their mother, Lucrezia, on account of the plague which had broken out in Florence. Indeed there was a report that Cosimo's malady was the plague, and many were afraid to visit him.

### PIERO DE' MEDICI *to* LORENZO and GIULIANO *his sons* *at Cafaggiuolo*

I wrote to you the day before yesterday how much worse Cosimo was. It appears to me that he is gradually sinking, and he thinks so himself. On Tuesday evening he would have no one in his room save Mona Contessina and myself. He began to recount all his past life, then he touched upon the government of the city and then on its commerce, and at last he spoke of the management of the private possessions of our family and of what concerns you two; taking comfort that you had good wits and bidding me educate you well so that you might be of help to me. Two things he deplored. First, that he had not done as much as he wished or could have accomplished; secondly, that he left me in such poor health and with much irksome business. Then he said he would make no will, not having made one whilst Giovanni was alive, seeing that we were always united in true love, amity, and esteem,

## COSIMO DI GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI

and when it pleased God to so order it he desired to be buried without pomp or show, and reminded me of his often expressed desire to be buried in S. Lorenzo. All this he said with much method and prudence, and with a courage that was marvellous to behold, adding that his life had been a long one and that he was ready and content to depart whensoever it pleased God. Yester morn he left his bed and caused himself to be carefully dressed. The Priors of S. Marco, of S. Lorenzo, and of the Badia of Fiesole were present. He made his confession to the Prior of S. Lorenzo and then heard mass, and he spoke the responses as though in perfect health. Then being asked the articles of faith he repeated them word by word and made his confession and took the Holy Sacrament with more devotion than can be described, having first asked pardon of all present. These things have raised my courage and my hope in the Almighty, although according to the flesh I am sorrowful, yet seeing the greatness of his soul and how well disposed he is, I am in part content that his end should be thus. Yesterday he was pretty well, and also during the night, but on account of his great age I have small hope of his recovery. Cause prayers to be said for him by the friars of Il Bosco<sup>1</sup> and bestow alms as seems best to you, praying God to leave him with us for a while, if such be for the best. And you, who are young, take example and assume your share of care and trouble as God has ordained, and being boys, make up your minds to be men; your condition and the present case demanding that of you lads. Above all take heed to everything that can add to your honour and be of use to you, because the time has come when it is necessary that you should rely on yourselves. Live in the fear of God and trust that all will go well. Of what befalls Cosimo I will advise you. We are expecting a doctor from Milan, but I have more hope in Almighty God than in aught else. No more at present.—Careggi, the 26th July 1464.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A monastery built by Cosimo not far from Cafaggiuolo, in the forest.

<sup>2</sup> *Cosmi Vita*, &c., *op. cit.* ii. 251.

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The following letter is undated, but as it refers chiefly to the character of Cosimo de' Medici, and to a certain extent describes him, I have inserted it here.

### MARSILIO FICINO *to the noble* LORENZO DE' MEDICI

Even as harmony delights us more at the moment it strikes our ears than when we remember tunes we have heard, and the actual sight of war moves us more than any recital thereof, thus the great deeds of noble and illustrious men animate our courage far more than the words of orators and philosophers who dispute about valour. For it is ordered by nature that things themselves should be more potent than their names, and that real events should move the soul with greater force than what is either false or may have happened. Therefore by imitating the deeds of Socrates we are taught better how to attain courage than by the art displayed by Aristotle in his writings on morality. And Christ solely by His example has done more to make us adopt a holy and virtuous way of life than all the orators and philosophers that ever existed. Therefore, my Lorenzo, whilst I applaud you for not despising the writings which teach morals, I beg you to prefer learning from reality instead of from description, as you would prefer a living thing from a dead. Particularly as you have decided to emulate that aged man on whom our Senate bestowed the title of Father of His Country. I mean the great Cosimo, your grandfather and my lord. A man prudent above all men, pious towards God, just and most charitable towards men, temperate in living, diligent in his care for his family, and still more so in the affairs of the Republic; a most honourable man who lived not only for himself, but for the good of his country and his God; whose soul was as humble as any man's, and yet great and exalted. I, my Lorenzo, for more than twelve years gave myself up to philosophy with him. He was as acute in reasoning as he was prudent and strong in govern-



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ing. Certainly I owe much to Plato, but must confess that I owe no less to Cosimo. Inasmuch as Plato only once showed me the Idea of courage, Cosimo showed it me every day. For the moment I will not mention his other qualities. Cosimo was as avaricious and careful of time as Midas of money; he spent his days parsimoniously, carefully counting every hour and avariciously saving every second; he often lamented the loss of hours. Finally, having like Solon the philosophor (even when occupied in most serious business) diligently studied philosophy, yet even till the last day when he departed from this world of shadows to go to light he devoted himself to the acquisition of knowledge. For when we had read together Plato's book dealing with the *Origin of the Universe* and the *Summum Bonum* he, as you who were present well know, soon after quitted this life as though he was really going to enjoy that happiness which he had tasted during our conversations. Farewell, and as God fashioned Cosimo according to the Idea of the world, do you continue as you have begun to fashion yourself according to the Idea of Cosimo.

MARSILIO FICINO.<sup>1</sup>

### BRIEF MEMORANDUM BY PIERO DE' MEDICI ABOUT HIS FATHER'S DEATH

I record that on the 1st August 1464, at the hour of 22½, Cosimo di Giovanni de' Medici quitted this life, having been a great sufferer from pains in his joints, although free from all other ills. Towards the end of his life he was afflicted with suppression of urine, which caused frequent fever. He was seventy-seven years of age, a tall, handsome man, and healthy, save for the above-mentioned ills. Of great prudence and still greater kindness, he was the most eminent and the richest citizen our city had possessed for many years, and was trusted and

<sup>1</sup> *Epistole Marsilii Ficini Florentini.* xv Decembris MCCCCXXXIII. Florentiæ.



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loved by the people above all other men. Indeed there is no record of any citizen who died at that age who was so kind and so famous, and was so universally mourned and with reason, for no man ever had to complain of him, but many have been helped, and succoured, and assisted, for his greatest pleasure lay in aiding others ; not only relations and friends, but strangers ; and what is more difficult to believe, and still more difficult to accomplish, those who were unfriendly. By such praiseworthy actions he made many persons his friends, who by their own fault or the fault of others had been his enemies. He was liberal, charitable, and merciful, and gave many alms during his life, not only in the city and the State, but in far distant places for things pertaining to religion, rebuilding churches, and giving for other worthy objects which had come under his notice. He was highly esteemed and believed in by all the lords and princes in and out of Italy. He filled all the greatest positions in our city, all foreign ones he declined ; but he joined in the most important and honourable embassies sent by our Republic in his time. In the city his commerce enriched many men, besides procuring a large fortune to himself. He was not only a wise and cautious man of business, but a lucky one. As has been said, he died on the aforesaid day in our house at Careggi, after receiving all the sacraments of Holy Church with the utmost devotion and reverence. He would not make a will, but left everything in my hands. He was buried in the church of S. Lorenzo in the earth, in the sepulchre ordered by him, without any honours or pomp, as he would have none but the canons and priests of the said church, the friars of S. Marco, and the canons regular of the Badia of Fiesole, and neither more nor less wax torches than were used at an ordinary funeral. This he ordered with his last breath ; saying that alms-giving and other good works ought to be performed while alive, as he had done, and were then of more use. Notwithstanding I, wishing to pay my filial debt to paternal piety, did what was requisite on account of those

## COSIMO DI GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI

who remained, ordering alms and masses, as follows in this book.

*Note of the Funeral and of the Masses that are to be said in the Church of S. Lorenzo and in other places for the Soul of Cosimo di Giovanni de' Medici, &c.*

On the morning of August 2, which was Thursday, the funeral took place in the church of S. Lorenzo; for wax we paid lire 43½; for torches, 94 lbs. of candles for putting in the church, and 13 small torches to be carried by the priests, in all 190½ lbs., and for 16 torches of 97 lbs. for placing round the body.

*Note of the Masses and Offices celebrated for the Soul of Cosimo*

To the Chapter and priests of S. Lorenzo for an office lasting eight consecutive days, beginning on August 3rd; with 30 masses for each office, which make 8 offices, with 240 masses for the octave, we paid 16 lire for 6 torches of 33 lbs. and 10 lbs. of candles.

To the Chapter and priests of S. Lorenzo for an office beginning on August 11th, and continuing for thirty consecutive days, finishing on the 11th September, we paid 60 lire per torch of wax of 170 lbs.

Then follows a long list of members of the family, friends, dependants, and slaves, each of whom had from 30 to 10 braccia each of black cloth for the funeral; the women of the family had also black veils and kerchiefs.

Besides the many offices celebrated in Florence for the soul of Cosimo, the various Companies of Rome, Venice, Milan, Bruges, Geneva, London, and Avignon celebrated a great many; and liberal alms were given, and many prisoners were pardoned and set free from divers prisons.

# LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

## *Memorandum of all the Men to whom was given Mourning for the said Funeral*

	Yds.	Ins.
Pietro di Cosimo de' Medici had dark clay cloth . . . . .	8	29
Pier Francesco di Lorenzo had cloth . . . . .	11	4
Lorenzo di Pietro di Cosimo had cloth and Giuliano . . . . .	16	29
Messer Carlo di Cosimo, cloth . . . . .	9	16
Niccodemo, Ducal Secretary, cloth . . . . .	8	29
Messer Gentile di Giorgio, Florentine Canon, cloth . . . . .	8	29
Maestro Mariotto di Niccolò, our doctor, cloth . . . . .	8	29
Messer Bartolommeo Scala, Chancellor, cloth . . . . .	8	29
Matteo di Ser Giovanni de' Rossi, cloth . . . . .	8	29
Fruosino d'Andrea da Panzano, cloth . . . . .	8	29
Ser Francesco Cantansanchi, cloth . . . . .	8	29
Ser Filippo di Cristofano, Piero's Chancellor, cloth . . . . .	8	29
Francesco di Giovanni Fracassini, Factor in Cafag- giuolo, cloth . . . . .	6	1
Felice di Simone, Factor in Careggi, cloth . . . . .	6	13
Piero di . . . , Factor at Fiesole . . . . .	6	13
Antonio di Meo Turco, Steward in Florence . . . . .	6	13
Guglielmo di Francesco da Rovereto . . . . .	6	13
Guasparri di Francesco da Vicchio . . . . .	6	13
Piero di Domenico, surnamed Malerba . . . . .	6	13
Prandino di Piero da Lodi . . . . .	6	13
Matteo di . . . da Vicchio, Barber . . . . .	6	13
Giovanni di Giovanni, German . . . . .	6	13
Piero d'Angiolino of Brieg, German . . . . .	6	13
Donnino di Jacopo, who is in Cafaggiuolo . . . . .	6	13
Andrea di Piero from Vienna . . . . .	6	13

## *Memorandum of all the Women who received Mourning for the said Funeral*

	Yds.	Ins.
Madonna Contessina, wife of Cosimo, had cloth, and besides eight veils and two kerchiefs . . . . .	20	8
Madonna Lucrezia, wife of Piero di Cosimo, cloth, and besides two veils and one kerchief . . . . .	8	29
Maria Nannina, daughter of Piero di Cosimo, cloth . . . . .	8	29
Madonna Ginevra, wife of the late Giovanni di Cosimo, cloth, and besides two veils and one kerchief . . . . .	8	29
Madonna Ginevra, wife of the late Lorenzo de' Medici, cloth, and besides two veils and one kerchief . . . . .	8	29

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	Yds.	Ins.
Laudomine, wife of Pier Francesco de' Medici, cloth, and two veils and one kerchief . . . . .	8	29
M. Lisabetta, wife of Sozo da Vernio, cloth, and two veils and one kerchief . . . . .	8	29
M. Luisa, wife of Alexandro da Vernio, cloth, and two veils and one kerchief . . . . .	8	29
M. Marta, wife of Gualtrotto da Vernio, cloth, and two veils and one kerchief . . . . .	8	29

## Maids

M. Marta, widow of Stefano da Villa nuova . . . . .	6	13
M. Maddalena di Giovanni di Benavenni . . . . .	6	13
M. Maddalena, widow of Martino da Barberino . . . . .	6	13
M. Maddalena, widow of Viviano da Cafaggiuolo . . . . .	6	13
M. Bartola, widow of — . . . . .	6	13

## Slaves

Caterina . . . . .	6	13
Crestina . . . . .	6	13
Caterina . . . . .	6	13
Tita . . . . .	6	13

Cosimo de' Medici died at Careggi on August 1, 1464. His family, as has been said, respected his wish that he should be buried as a private citizen, without any public and official pomp. His fellow-citizens nevertheless resolved to commemorate in some special fashion the decease of the real head of their State. A minute setting forth his services was incorporated in the *Acta* of the Ten, who also passed a law declaring that he was to be afterwards known by the title of *Pater Patriæ*, and appointed Donato Acciaiuoli to commend its adoption to the people in a set oration. The law was adopted by acclamation, and Cosimo is always known as Cosimo Pater Patriæ.

## PIERO DI COSIMO DE' MEDICI

(1416-1469)

PIETRO, or, as he was commonly called, Piero de' Medici, was forty-eight when his father died in 1464, and had neither the moral nor the physical strength necessary for his position. He was a martyr to gout, from whence his surname *il Gottoso*. Kindly and indolent by nature, he could be stern, terse, and eloquent when roused, and his political insight was keen. The commencement of his reign, if one may use the word, was unfortunate. Cosimo on his deathbed had recommended his son to consult Diotisalvi Neroni, and to follow his advice. The shrewd old man had been singularly deceived in his estimate of the character of the man he bade Piero take as his right hand. Machiavelli's account of the conspiracy which so nearly wrecked the power of the house of Medici is as follows :

“Messer Diotisalvi, moved more by his own ambition than by affection for Piero or gratitude for the benefits he had received from Cosimo, thought it would be easy to ruin Piero's credit, and to deprive him of the authority inherited from his father. He therefore gave him advice which appeared most honest and reasonable, but in reality was meant to lead to his ruin. Showing him the disorder in his affairs, and how much money was absolutely necessary to save his own credit and that of the State, he declared that the most honourable way to remedy his difficulties would be to call in the debts due to his father by both foreigners and citizens. For Cosimo, in order to gain partisans in Florence and friends abroad, had been most generous in the use of his riches, and the moneys owing to him amounted to a very considerable sum. Such counsel seemed good and honest to Piero, who wished to remedy his affairs with his own means. But as soon as he demanded repayment of these loans the citizens, as though he wanted to take what was theirs and not what was his own, complained



*Anderson*

PIERO DI COSIMO DE' MEDICI.  
*Detail from the fresco by Benozzo  
Gozzoli in the Chapel of Palazzo  
Riccardi, Florence.*





## PIERO DI COSIMO DE' MEDICI

loudly, and showed small respect in speaking ill of him, and accusing him of ingratitude and avarice. When Messer Diotisalvi saw the universal disfavour his advice had brought on Piero he joined Messer Luca Pitti, Messer Agnolo Acciaiuoli, and Niccolò Soderini, and they conspired to deprive Piero of his credit and his authority. They were influenced by various motives. Messer Luca aspired to fill the position held by Cosimo, having become so great a man that he disdained to obey Piero. Messer Diotisalvi, knowing that Messer Luca was unfit to be the head of the government, thought that once Piero was out of the way the management must of necessity fall to him. Niccolò Soderini desired that the city should enjoy more freedom, and be governed according to the wishes of the magistrates, while Messer Agnolo had private reasons for hating the Medici. Some time before his son Raffaello had married Alessandra de' Bardi, whose dower was very large. Owing either to her own misconduct, or to the faults of others, she was maltreated by her father-in-law and her husband; so one night Lorenzo d'Illarione, her kinsman, moved to pity for the girl, with many men-at-arms, took her away from the house of Messer Agnolo. The Acciaiuoli complained of the insult done to them by the Bardi, and the matter being laid before Cosimo he decreed that the dower was to be repaid to Alessandra, and that she was to decide whether she would or would not return to her husband. Messer Agnolo did not think that in delivering this judgment Cosimo had behaved as a friend, and not being able to do anything against him he determined to take revenge on his son. The conspirators, though animated by such diverse motives, agreed to give the same reason publicly, declaring that they desired the city to be ruled by magistrates and not by the uncontrolled will of a few men. The hatred felt against Piero and the reasons for attacking him, were increased by the bankruptcy of many merchants for which he was blamed; his unexpected demand to be repaid having caused these men to fail, and thus brought great discredit and loss upon the city."<sup>1</sup>

Florence was divided into two camps, the Party of the Hill, so-called because Luca Pitti's palace was being erected on the highest part of the city, and the Party of the Plain, because the palace of the Medici was on the flat. "While things were in

<sup>1</sup> *Delle Istorie Fiorentine*, Niccolò Machiavelli, pp. 410 et seq. Milano, 1823.

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this disorder," continues Machiavelli, "the time arrived for renewing the chief magistrate, and Niccolò Soderini was elected Gonfalonier of Justice." But Niccolò wasted his two months' tenure of office in futile attempts to "reform" the government, accomplished nothing, and quitted office a discredited man. The conspirators then determined to murder Piero as he returned to Florence from his villa of Careggi. He was only saved by the presence of mind of his young son Lorenzo, who preceded him on horseback, and noticed armed men loitering on the road. Lorenzo rode quietly on announcing that Piero was close behind him, but sent back in hot haste a messenger to order his father's litter to take an unfrequented lane. Luca Pitti, perceiving that if the Medici were swept away Neroni and not himself would be the head of the Republic, betrayed his fellow-conspirators, and made peace with Piero. His defection was a death-blow to the conspiracy and to his own fortunes. Neroni and Niccolò Soderini fled to Venice, Acciaiuoli to Siena first and then to Naples, and the power of the Medici was once more firmly established.

Piero inherited his father's love of letters and of art. He was the first to employ Luca della Robbia, who decorated the ceiling of his study in the Medici palace and made tiles for the floor, which, as Vasari says, "was a new thing and most excellent for summer." Luca also made the vaulted roof of the marble chapel of the Crucifix inside the ancient church of S. Miniato a Monte, erected by Piero's orders by his father's faithful friend, Michelozzo Michelozzi.

Whatever currents of opinion disturbed the city of Florence at the death of Cosimo de' Medici, foreign powers universally recognised his son Piero as his successor in the rule of the Republic. The Pope sent him a letter of condolence on his father's death, while the King of France, Louis XI., testified his regard for the Medici by creating him a Privy Councillor, and giving him the right to add the Lily of France to the arms of his family.

### POPE PIUS II. *to* PIERO DE' MEDICI

BELOVED SON,—Greeting and apostolic blessing. We have just heard that Cosimo, your father, has departed this life.

## PIERO DI COSIMO DE' MEDICI

This is indeed bitter and mournful news, and most grievous to us. For we loved him with sincere affection as a man whom we always found devoted to ourselves and to the Apostolic See, whom we knew to be gifted with unusual insight and kindness. Yet, my son, though many besides yourself will mourn his death, you must bear with a brave heart this fate which divine law has ordained for mortals. Accept this expression of God's will patiently, and do not give way to grief. If you consider the course of human existence, Cosimo has had a long life; he has paid his debt to nature, and in his old age he has gone the way of all flesh. His life was full of honour; his glory extended beyond his own city to all Italy, nay, to the whole world; he has lived in the highest esteem and, what we must value more, in piety, and abiding in the fear of God. It is not right to mourn the death of a man who has lived righteously and justly, since we must believe that he has gone from this troubled human existence to one that is full of peace and tranquillity. As for us, beloved son, we intend to preserve towards you the feelings we had for your father, and for him we had a singular paternal affection. We promise that we shall always do what in our judgment will be conducive to your honour and your interest, and to that of the house of Medici. This we wish you to understand.—Given at Ancona under the seal of the Fisherman, the 8th day of August 1464, in the sixth year of our pontificate.<sup>1</sup>

LOUIS XI., *King of France*, to PIERO DE' MEDICI

*Dilecto Filio Nobili Viro Petro de' Medicis.* Louis, by the grace of God King of France.

MOST DEAR AND GREAT FRIEND,—We have received by our beloved and faithful courier Francesco Nori your letters, which you sent to us by him. From him and from your letters we have learned how kindly you have acted in

<sup>1</sup> *Cosmi Vita*, op. cit. ii. 286.

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our favour towards our dear and beloved uncle the Duke of Milan about the affair of the Marches of which we wrote, and we are much pleased and very grateful to you. We also heard of the death of the late Cosimo de' Medici, our great friend and your father, which has given and does give us much sorrow, both for the singular love we bore him and for the great and laudable services he rendered to us and to the French crown during his whole life. For the enduring memory thereof and of the friendship he showed to us and to the crown, and in order to honour him and you and all his relatives and family, and for the salvation of his soul, we beg you to dedicate to the service of your said dead father banners with our arms, of such number as seems best to you and is customary in such cases. We have also, in order to show the confidence we place in you, in your wisdom, loyalty, goodness, and diligence, and for the preservation of the friendship and goodwill which always existed between your late father and ourselves, appointed you one of our privy councillors, and have ordered the letters patent to be made out, which we send by the bearer; and when you desire anything for yourself, for your family or for your Commune, we shall grant it in your favour if you signify it and let us know by the said Franceschino, for whom we have always felt and feel singular affection and esteem.<sup>2</sup>

*Privilege granted by Louis XI. to the Medici to quarter the Lily of France in their arms*

Louis, by the grace of God King of France. We make known to all present and for the future: Bearing in mind the great, praiseworthy, and much to be commended fame enjoyed by the late Cosimo de' Medici during his life in all his actions and his affairs, which he conducted with such great virtue and prudence that his children and other relatives and friends must

<sup>1</sup> This document is undated, but was in all probability given in 1464.

## PIERO DI COSIMO DE' MEDICI

be commended and held in high honour. For these reasons and moved by the supplication and prayer which has been addressed to us by our friends, and by our loyal Councillor Piero de' Medici, son of the said late Cosimo de' Medici, we by our own will, special grace, full power and royal authority decree and command by these presents that the said Piero de' Medici . . . his heirs and successors born and to be born in legal wedlock may henceforward and for ever have and bear in the arms three Fleur de lis of the shape and manner herein portrayed . . . And these arms we have given and give to them by these said presents, to use as seems good to them in all places and among all people, in time of peace or in time of war, without any impediment either now or hereafter being placed to their so doing. And in order that this thing should be firm and stable for ever, we have caused our seal to be set to these two presents, reserving our rights in all other things and our authority in everything.—Given at Mont Luçon in the month of May, the year of grace 1465, and the fourth year of our reign.<sup>1</sup>

Owing to Piero's miserable health, his son Lorenzo was sent, even as quite a lad, to visit foreign courts and to receive foreign princes who passed through Tuscany. Thus in April 1465 he met Don Federigo d'Aragona, second son of the King of Naples, at Pisa, on his way to Milan to escort his eldest brother's bride, Ippolita Maria, daughter of Francesco Sforza, to Naples. The two youths formed a lasting friendship, and on Federigo's return with his sister-in-law they came to Florence and stayed in the Medici palace. Ippolita and Lorenzo then became such friends that she never hesitated to appeal to him when, as often happened in the needy Neapolitan court, she wanted money. They often corresponded, and when Lorenzo went to Naples in 1479, the Duchess of Calabria and Don Federigo were his powerful allies. The following letter, a remarkable one for a lad of seventeen, was sent to Don Federigo with a volume of poems selected from those writers Lorenzo considered to be masters of the Tuscan tongue.

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Magnifici Vita*, Angelo Fabronio, ii. 117. Pisis, 1784.



# LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

There are two copies in Florence, one in the Nazionale Library,<sup>1</sup> the other in the Riccardiana.<sup>2</sup>

## *The Magnificent LORENZO to the Illustrious LORD FEDERIGO, son of the King of Naples*

Often have I reflected, Illustrious my Lord Federigo, which among the many and infinite poems of antiquity is the most excellent. Certes, one must have been more admirable than the others. It has always been a matter of surprise to me that no great and fine work was originated in ancient times, either of hands or head, which did not receive private and public recognition and reward. So as all rivers and springs are said to have their origin from the great Ocean, all the famous deeds and marvellous works of bygone men may be said to derive from this laudable habit. The nutriment of every art is honour, and by the desire of glory alone are men's minds spurred to produce admirable works. Thus in Rome we see magnificent triumphal entries, in Greece the famous Olympian games, and both are celebrated by poets and orators with infinite mastery. For this alone were the chariot and the triumphal

<sup>1</sup> Palatina Codex 204. The volume bound in white vellum contains 622 pages. There is no title-page. Lorenzo's letter occupies the first six and a half pages, and without any division or new paragraph follows the Life of Dante by Boccaccio, in the same handwriting. At page 63 the writing changes and continues the same for forty pages. The poems were evidently copied by various scribes, as the writing so often differs.

<sup>2</sup> Codex 2723. A far smaller volume in modern wooden binding. The title-page is: *Rime del Poliziano, di Lorenzo de' Medici, di Dante e d'altri*. The famous letter begins on page 71 (really 142, as only the right-hand page is numbered) and above it is written in a different and more modern hand in red ink, *Epistola di M. Angelo Poliziano al S. Federigo insieme con raccolto volgare mandatogli dal Magco. Lorenzo*. The same scribe has written the names of the various poets in the margin of the letter where they are mentioned in red ink. The Life of Dante by Boccaccio and many of the poems that are in the Palatina Codex are wanting. At page 78 (i.e. 156) the handwriting changes, and at the end of the volume is inserted a Latin autograph letter from Poliziano to Philippus Beroaldus. In 1814 the Abbate Vincenzo Nannucci and Luigi Ciampolini published a collection of Poliziano's poems and at the end printed Lorenzo's letter, attributing it to Poliziano. They were evidently misled by the anonymous annotator of this codex. The attribution to Poliziano is absurd, as he was then barely fourteen years of age, and only knew Lorenzo in 1470, when he sent him a translation of part of the Iliad (see p. 157).

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arch, the highly decorated theatres, the statues, the palm branches, the garlands, the funereal honours; for this alone were devised other splendid ornaments, and thus were encouraged high and noble deeds of the intellect and of the sword, all the marvellous works of the great men of ancient days, who assuredly (as our Tuscan poet says) will never lack fame so long as this world lasts. These of a truth were great and divine men, desirous of enduring fame and supremely grateful to those who, by celebrating the valour and noble deeds of great men in fine poetry, made their names immortal. Inflamed by such desire, Alexander the Great on seeing the tomb of the famous Achilles with a sigh uttered those memorable words: "Fortunate art thou to have so glorious a sepulchre and to have been sung by such a pen." Fortunate indeed. For without the divine poet Homer Achilles' body and fame would have been buried in one tomb together. And even this poet, excellent above all others, would not have attained such honour and glory had he not been so admired by a learned Athenian, almost one may say raised from death to life. For after his death the great poet's noble work was scattered and dismembered until Pisistratus, prince of Athens, a man endowed with many virtues and of noble presence, offered large rewards to whosoever brought him verses by Homer. Thus with great diligence and care he collected and reconstructed the glorious poem, giving to it eternal life and to himself everlasting glory. For this reason the only epitaph on his statue is the record that he collected the poems of the great Homer. Oh, truly divine men, born for the good of humanity and of the world. The prince knew that his other deeds, however admirable, were as nothing compared with this one poem. Such were these antique men, whose deeds are not to be equalled in later times, and indeed are hardly believed. For as rewards for noble deeds no longer exist the flame of courage is extinguished; and as men do nothing worthy of praise the singers of great deeds are despised. If this had not been the

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case we should not now mourn the loss of so many Greek and Latin writers. With them have also perished many of our own old poets, who had begun to cultivate the desert fields of the Tuscan tongue, which now again, in our century, are covered with wild flowerets and weeds. But thy gracious hand, Illustrious Federigo, which thou hast deigned extend to them will, after their long struggle, lead them safely into port.

When we were together last year in the ancient city of Pisa we spoke of those who had written poetry in the Tuscan tongue, and thy Lordship expressed a desire that I should collect their works in one volume for thee. Being desirous in this, as in all other matters, to fulfil thy wishes I have, not without great labour, caused search to be made for the works of all the old poets, and choosing the less rugged pieces have gathered them into the volume I now send thy Lordship, in the hopes that my efforts, such as they are, may please and that thou wilt accept it in memory of me and as a proof of my true affection. Let no one, however, despise this Tuscan tongue as unadorned or diffuse. For if its richness and beauty be rightly understood it will not be accounted rugged but rich and refined. There is nothing delicate, elegant, graceful, or ornate, nothing witty, ingenious or subtle, nothing ample and rich, nothing magnificent and sonorous, finally nothing ardent, bold, or moving, that is not found in those two magnates Dante and Petrarch, and even in others of whom thou, my Lord, didst cite brilliant examples. Poetry (according to what Petrarch writes in a Latin epistle) was held in high honour by the old Romans, and after long neglect appeared again in Sicily not so many centuries ago; then passing into France finally came to Italy as though to its own home. The first who courted the new style was Guittone of Arezzo, and about the same time the famous Bolognese, Guido Guizzinello. Both were learned in philosophy, serious, and sententious. The first rather harsh and severe and without the gift of eloquence, the second far more lucid, suave, and ornate, so that our honoured

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Dante did not scruple to call him his father and also father of others who wrote love songs of great sweetness and charm. He was certainly the first to colour and soften our language, which had only been roughly sketched out by the rude Aretine. After them emerged the elegant Florentine, Guido Cavalcanti, a subtle logician and philosopher, an honour to his age. As he was handsome and graceful in person and of most noble blood, so there was in his writings something, I know not what, more beautiful, noble, and rare, than in others. Acute in reasoning, sonorous, admirable, and grave in his sentences, rich and elevated in composition, wise and prudent; and all these gifts are enhanced, and as clothed in a precious garment, by a rare and exquisite style. Had he used this on a wider field no doubt he would have attained to the highest honours. One of his most admirable works is a song in which this subtle and charming poet describes every quality, virtue, and precedent of love. This was held in such high estimation that it was commentated by three renowned philosophers, his contemporaries, among them the Roman Egidio. We must not forget Bonagiunta of Lucca and the notary of Lentino, both grave and sententious writers, but so devoid of charm that they may be proud to be mentioned in the company of these honoured men. They, and Pier delle Vigne in the time of Guittone, were celebrated. The little written by the latter is not without solemnity and erudition. He was the keeper (as Dante says) of the keys of Frederick's heart, and locked and unlocked it at his pleasure. After these shone those two great men who illumined our tongue, Dante and Petrarch. Of them (as Sallust says of Carthage) I think it better to say nothing than to say too little. Onesto the Bolognese and the earlier Silicians who flourished before them and were therefore less versed in their art, did not lack talent or ambition. Cino da Pistoja, in my estimation, well deserves his high reputation; tender and loving, he was the first to entirely shake off the antique ruggedness of which the divine Dante

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was not altogether free. Then comes a long line of more modern writers who are far behind those two great ones. All these, and with them some of our own time, come to thank thee, who art more worthy of praise than that ancient Athenian already mentioned. He only gave immortality to one, whilst thou givest it to many. At the end of the volume (as seemed to be thy desire) we have copied a few of our own sonnets and songs, so that when reading them thou canst remember my loyalty and affection. Although not worthy to be placed among the splendid works of the old poets, yet they may serve as a foil to show their greater beauty. Receive, therefore, Illustrious Lord, this volume and myself, not only in thy house, but in thy heart and soul, as thou hast a blithe and enduring abode in ours.

In the commentary Lorenzo wrote on some of his sonnets he not only, as in the above letter, praises Italian, but affirms its equality with the classic languages, and declares that neither Ovid, Tibullus, Catullus, or Propertius wrote love songs of such beauty and grace as Petrarch. It was by this enthusiastic participation in the intellectual pursuits and interests of his day that Lorenzo, even as a youth, attained such popularity with his fellow-citizens. They were proud of the lad who was already known as a poet, who excelled in all bodily exercises, and who was treated by foreign princes and potentates as an equal. The above letter to Federigo d'Aragona shows that he was, to quote John Addington Symonds: "A Florentine of the Florentines. Tuscan to the backbone, imbued with the spirit of his city, a passionate lover of her customs and pastimes, a complete master of her vernacular. His education, though it fitted him for Platonic discussions with Ficino and rendered him an amateur of humanistic culture, had failed to make a pedant of him. Much as he appreciated the classics, he preferred his Tuscan poets; and what he learned at school he brought to bear upon the study of the native literature."<sup>1</sup>

Soon after his return from Pisa Lorenzo was despatched by his father to Bologna, Ferrara, Venice, and Milan. Piero calls

<sup>1</sup> *Renaissance in Italy*, J. A. Symonds, iv. 323. Smith, Elder, & Co., London, 1898.



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the journey "the touchstone of thy abilities." The letters show that the boy of seventeen was received as a prince, and discussed with the rulers of the various states he visited important political matters, in all of which he was kept carefully informed by his father. At the same time, with characteristic Medicean shrewdness, Lorenzo was instructed to place himself in the hands of his father's agents in each city visited, and the whole journey could be represented as a tour of inspection of the various agencies of a great banking-house, and the introduction of the heir to the business of the family.

### PIERO DE' MEDICI to his son LORENZO at Milan

Thou hast arrived at Milan later than I thought, and perhaps than thou didst wish, on account of the delay caused by the honours paid thee by the Duke at Ferrara. I have written to thank him, and to say we are his debtors, and also to Messer Giovanni Bentivoglio I have sent thanks, &c. Thou art to follow the advice of Pigello<sup>1</sup> and his written instructions; be careful not to worry the Duke, he will have enough of that with this marriage.<sup>2</sup> Thou art to consider thyself as the servant and as belonging to the household of his Excellency, and to ask Pigello's advice as to what visits to pay, and what to say. Remember to be civil and alert; act as a man and not as a boy. Show sense, industry, and manly endeavour, so that thou mayst be employed in more important things, for this journey is the touchstone of thy abilities. I sent by carrier the rest of the silver [plate] to Pigello, but have not yet heard of its arrival. If thou needst aught else let me know, but Pigello will provide all that is necessary. Consult with him about inviting Don Federigo one day to the house there, or anything else thou thinkest needful. Arrange with him after due reflection, and whatever is settled do with splendour and in honourable fashion. Guglielmo,<sup>3</sup> thou, and Pigello can settle

<sup>1</sup> Manager of the Medici Bank at Milan.

<sup>2</sup> Ippolita Maria, daughter of Francesco Sforza, was married by proxy to the Duke of Calabria, eldest son of King Ferrante of Naples.

<sup>3</sup> Guglielmo de' Pazzi, husband of Piero's daughter Bianca.



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together, and whatever is decided will please me, only, as I said, do not stint money, but do thyself honour. When thou hast time, after having paid thy visits, commend me to the Duke and to Madonna, to Count Galeazzo and to whoso else thou thinkest right. Amuse thyself and do not worry about us here, the time will come soon enough when thou wilt have to do so. Nannina is well again ; we will talk about her marriage after thy return from Naples. Gugliemo's family are all well ; tell him not to forget them entirely, and be not so taken up with all those festivities as to forget thyself. I think thou hast better leave there a few days before the others, because as I have Madonna the Princess here in our house, and Gugliemo and thyself being absent, I shall be as a man without hands, but of this I will write later. No more at present. Christ guard thee.—Florence, May 4, 1465.<sup>1</sup>

### PIERO DE' MEDICI to his son LORENZO at Milan

I have thy letter of May 2nd from Venice, saying thou wert to leave the next day. Alessandro wrote on the 3rd and told me of thy departure, and of what thou didst at Ferrara to please the Duke, and of thy visits at Venice to the Doge and other gentlemen, all of which I approve and commend, and I think thou hast paid nearly all necessary visits. Thou wilt have received my letter of the 4th telling thee what conduct to pursue, all of which remember ; in a word, it is necessary for thee now to be a man and not a boy ; be so in words, deeds, and manners, and if thou givest dinners or other entertainments do not let there be any stint in money or whatever else is needful to do thyself honour. For the present I say no more. Before leaving thou shalt hear what to do. I have consulted with the citizens here, and they all agree that I must receive the princes<sup>2</sup> in our house on their return, and the Signoria has commanded

<sup>1</sup> *Aroh. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza xx. No. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Don Federigo and his sister-in-law, Ippolita Maria.



Da Vinegia ho la tua de 2 dì et dovevi partire el dì seguente et così da Alessandro a dì 3 m' avisa essere seguito et quanto haveir seguito a Ferrara nel soprastare a complacentie di quel Signore et a Vinegia nel vicitare el doge et quelli altri gentiluomini che tucto lodo et commendo et così credo che harete facto la più parte delle vicitationi harj trovato una mia lettera scrittati a dì 4 e per quella dettoti come t'abbi a governare per questa el simile ti ricordo et per dire con una parola a te bisogna fare conto essere huomo et non garzone le parole e gesti et modi sieno circa quest' effecto et bisognando convitare o fare alcuna altra cosa per farti honore non perdonare a spesa o cosa che facci di bisogno per ora non entrerò in altro Innanzi che parta di costì sarai avisato di quello che haraj a fare da poi la partita ma mi sono ristretto con questi cittadini et a ciascuno è paruto jo debba ricevere alla tornata questi S. qui in casa nostra et così m'a comandato. la S. la quale ho ubbidito volentieri et era mestieri che tu o Guglielmo vi trovassi di qua che m'aresti levato assai noje pur si farà el melgio che si potrà Sarà necessario che vi partiate qualche giorno innanzi alla brigata di costà et a tempo ne sarete avisati. Io non ti scrissi a Vinegia perchè 'l soprastare tuo a Ferrara ruppe l'ordine benchè poco porti la brigata qui nostra grazia di Dio tutti siamo sani et sta bene la Nannina in tucto guarì la brigata di Guglielmo similmente sta benissimo così atendete voi acciò che ritorniate qui in buon ordine qui s'aparecchia per venuta di cotesti S. fare una bella festa per San Giovanni et così si cerca per altra via fare loro grandiximo honore essi levato su Giuliano nostro messo al punto da Baccio Benci et da altri et vorrebbero armeggiare ma farla altrimenti Mca. che non s'è usato La S. vuole che faccino io non me ne contento vedrò di sgabellarmene se potrò non vorrei tante noie a un tracto et maraviglomi di Giovanni de' Pazzi che havendo facto una volta ci si rimette la seconda che seguira sapraj Ne altro al presente Xpo ti guardi In Firenze a dì XI di maggio 1465.

Non ti scordi raccomandarmi al Mco. conte Guasparre.

PIERO DE MEDICI.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The address is torn, and there only remains :  
 . entio de Medicis  
 ediolani.

(*Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza 20, No. 157.)

[illegible]

Prova de Madrug



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me to do so: I obey willingly, but it would have taken much trouble off my hands hadst thou and Guglielmo been here; however, we will do the best we can. It will be better for thee to leave a few days before the others, thou shalt be warned in time. I did not write to Venice because the delay at Ferrara threw out all arrangements, but it is of no consequence. All our family here are well, and we hope thou art the same and wilt return in safety. We are preparing great festivities for these princes on S. John's day, and shall try and do them honour also in other ways. Our Giuliano has been persuaded by Baccio Benci and others to arrange a tournament, but in more magnificent fashion than usual. The Signoria wishes it; I am against it, and shall try to get out of it if possible. I do not want to have so many bothers at the same time, and am astonished that Giovanni de' Pazzi, having done it once, undertakes to do it again. Thou shalt know what is decided. No more at present. Christ guard thee.—In Florence on the 11th day of May 1465.

Do not forget to commend me to the Magnificent Count Guasparre.

PIERO DE' MEDICI.<sup>1</sup>

S. John's Day (24th June) is still a great holiday in Florence. The cathedral and the baptistery are illuminated, and fireworks (the scaffoldings for which used to be erected on the Ponte della Carraja until the tramway took possession of the bridge) are now let off on the Piazza Michelangelo. An old chronicler writes: "On the day of S. John, the patron saint of the city, and on the vigil thereof, not only are there infinite demonstrations of spiritual joy, but everything that can be done in such a city is done to show temporal happiness and gaiety. Swift horses called *Barberi* race in public for a *palio*, or banner, of cloth of gold lined with precious fur. Merchants display untold riches in gold, jewels, pearls, and money, and in cloth of gold, silks, and woollen goods of incredible value. There are illuminations, bonfires, and fireworks, both public and private, and the whole city is given over to rejoicing. Among other diversions is jousting. This is a game played by

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza xx. No. 15.



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men clothed in the richest damasks and costumes and varied liveries, according to the costumes and liveries of their families, who place themselves in proper order in the field (having first triumphantly escorted an emperor in a gilded car, with a fine and noble procession of kings, dukes, marquesses, counts, soldiers, and baggage waggons), on splendidly caparisoned horses, well trained to race. First they race in the public squares, and then in certain places set apart for breakneck exercises they break lances with no small dexterity."

On that day also the Signori, surrounded by their attendants, and the soldiers and trumpeters of the Commune, sat on the *ringhiera*<sup>1</sup> of the Palazzo Vecchio, in their magnificent official costumes, which must have been rather trying in hot summer weather. The Gonfalonier was clad in a long loose crimson velvet coat lined with ermine and embroidered with golden stars; his *berretta*, or cap, was turned up with ermine and trimmed with gold lace, pearls, and silver embroidery, like the rays of stars. The crimson coats of cloth worn by the Priors were also lined with ermine, and had ermine collars and cuffs, and they wore a large red *berretta* or a hood. The Podestà dressed like the Priors, but without a hood; the Preposto's coat was of black satin, and his *lucco* of black velvet was lined with satin of various colours, and he always wore a hood. Seated thus in state, the Signori received tribute from all the cities, castles, and villages that were under their rule or protection.

Dati enlarges on the magnificent and marvellous aspect of the Piazza della Signoria, "with one hundred towers, which shone like gold, some on waggons, some borne on the shoulders of men. These last, made of wood, pasteboard, and coloured wax figures, are called *tapers* (*ceri*). Inside the towers are men, who cause these figures to move and to turn round. They represented horsemen tilting, foot-soldiers with spears or waving banners, and girls dancing in a ring. Near and around the *ringhiera* hung a hundred or more *palii* or banners, their staves being stuck into the iron rings on the walls. First were those of the chief cities who send tribute to the Commune,

<sup>1</sup> A long balustrade of stone raised several feet above the Piazza, with steps leading up to it, which once occupied the front of the Palazzo Vecchio to the left of the door. The erection was decreed on May 27, 1323, of "*unam nobilem, pulchram et decentem arengheriam, in muris seu juxta muros Palatii Populi in eo loco seu parte dicti palatii ubi videbitur officia dominorum priorum.*"

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as Pisa, Arezzo, Pistoja, Volterra, Cortona, Lucignano, and Castiglione Aretino, and of certain lords of Poppi and Piombino, who are under the protection of the Commune, made of thick velvet, lined with satin or with silk ; the rest are of strips of thinner velvet, or of other cloth or silk ; so that the sight is truly marvellous. The first offering in the morning is made by the Captains of the Guelph party, with all their knights and gentlemen, and ambassadors and foreign knights who accompany them, and a great number of the most honourable citizens of Florence ; the great banner of the Guelph party being borne before them by one of their followers on a tall horse, caparisoned in white cloth embroidered with the device of the Guelph party. Then followed the afore-mentioned *palii*, or banners, each one carried by a man on horseback, and both man and horse are clothed in silk. One after another they go in the order in which they were called to offer the said *palii* to the church of S. Giovanni, which are the tributes paid by the places conquered by the Florentines.

“The *ceri*, or tapers, which resemble golden towers, are the tributes of the most ancient possessions of the Florentines, and according to their rank they proceed one after another to offer them to S. Giovanni, and the next day the tapers are all stuck up round the inside of the church where they remain until the next feast-day, when they are removed and used for the altars, and some are sold by auction. After the tapers a marvellous quantity of large wax candles are offered, some of a hundred pounds weight, some of fifty or less, carried by the peasants belonging to the villas from whence they are sent. Then the Masters of the Mint offer a splendid taper, borne on a richly adorned car drawn by a pair of oxen whose loin-cloths bear the device of the Mint, and the said Masters are accompanied by about four hundred venerable men, all matriculated in and belonging to the Guild of Cloth-weavers. The last to make offerings are the Signori, the Priors, and their colleagues, with the Podestà and the Captain, in great pomp with many servants, and so many instruments, fifes and trumpets, that the whole world seemed to resound. After the Signori had left, all the horses that have come for the race are presented, and then the Flemings and Brabanters—weavers of woollen cloth—who are in Florence make their offering ; and lastly, twelve prisoners, delivered from gaol for love of God in honour of

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S. Giovanni, are offered to him. When all this has been done, men and women return home to dine, and in all the city that day are so many marriages and great banquets, with innumerable fifes, music, songs, dances, and gaiety, that it seemed as though the place was Paradise."

In 1466 Piero sent Lorenzo, then eighteen years of age, to Rome on a mission of great moment both politically and commercially. Perhaps the most important part of the private business was to secure from the Pope a monopoly of working the alum mines discovered not many years before in the short range of volcanic hills lying round the little village of La Tolfa (Tofa), about eleven miles due west of Civita Vecchia and within the Pope's dominions. A few deposits of alum had been known and partially worked in Europe, *i.e.* at Volterra and Ischia: but for all practical purposes almost all the alum used in Christendom came from Asia Minor, and the supply was always inferior to the increasing demand. A certain Giovanni di Castro prospecting among the hills round La Tolfa found what he believed to be an inexhaustible supply, "seven hills of alum." Castro made sure of his find by calcinating the stone. He then hastened to Rome, appeared before the Pope, and somewhat grandiloquently announced his discovery. "I make known to you a victory over the Turk. He draws yearly from the Christians more than 300,000 pieces of gold, paid to him for the alum with which we dye wool of various colours, because none is found in Italy, save a little at Ischia. . . . I have found seven hills so abounding in alum that they might supply seven worlds. If you will send workmen, cause furnaces to be built and the stone to be calcined, you may furnish almost all Europe, and what money the Turk used to acquire will fall into your hands." The Holy See made haste to secure the newly-found treasure, and in order to have a monopoly in the sale the Pope excommunicated every one who tried to import alum into Europe from the Turkish dominions. So determined were the Popes to maintain what in modern language would be called their "corner in alum," that in the proclamation of Indulgences it was always expressly declared that the pardon promised did not include those who imported alum into Europe from the Turkish dominions.

Such a deposit needed capital to work it properly and the Holy See farmed out the monopoly, protected by excommunica-

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tion, to a firm of capitalists. Young Lorenzo was instructed to secure, and did obtain, this very valuable concession for his family. Hereafter the profits of the monopoly of alum were a source of great wealth to the Medici.

The political problem, overshadowing all others, entrusted to the youthful Lorenzo was the maintenance of the league between the King of Naples, Milan, and Florence. This was the keystone of Piero's foreign policy. He believed it to be essential to the balance of power and the preservation of peace in the peninsula. The alliance received an almost deadly blow in the somewhat sudden death of Francesco Sforza, the Duke of Milan, and Piero's fears are reflected in the despairing letters he wrote to his son. The league between the three powers survived the shock. Francesco Sforza's son Galeazzo was, after some little delay, universally recognised as his father's successor, and the foreign policy of Piero de' Medici was maintained.

But the note of despair in Piero's letters was probably occasioned by a presentiment of what might, and what actually did, occur within Florence herself. As has been said, many of the hitherto strenuous supporters of the Medici within the Republic were inclined to revolt against the continuance of their rule, and the death of Francesco Sforza furnished the occasion for testing their strength. It had been part of Cosimo's foreign policy to support Sforza at Milan by a subsidy from the Florentine treasury. On his death the question was at once raised whether the grant was to be continued to his successor Galeazzo. Piero supported its continuance. It was part of the Triple Alliance and an essential portion of his foreign policy. Yet it was also capable of being represented as something which concerned only the internal affairs of the city. This was at once seized upon by Luca Pitti and Diotisalvi Neroni. We see all these fears reflected in the letters of Piero to Lorenzo while the latter was at Rome.

The letter from Luigi Pulci shows how the young Lorenzo was already recognised as one of the foremost citizens of Florence and the future lord of the city, round whom aspiring men desired to rally. Pulci had been banished from Florence and was in hiding on account of his brother's debts for which he had become surety.



# LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

LUIGI PULCI to LORENZO DE' MEDICI<sup>1</sup>

*Sis felix, mi Laurenti, &c.*—Thou hast decided to leave me in these woods among the snow, so lonely and so desolate, and to go to Rome. Such is my destiny that to all my other troubles is added this one, that I am never to go a journey with thee on horseback. When shall I go? When I am quite old? What more faithful servant or companion canst thou find who is more maltreated and repulsed by heaven? How many times have we talked together about Rome, and that I was to be there with thee: why dost thou leave me, art thou afraid I should be an expense to thee? Do not fear, for in spite of my adverse fortune I should still do thee honour. From thee I should only need a horse. I have so many friends in that city and enough wits not to shame thee as perhaps thou fearest. Of a truth thou drivest me from thee wrongfully, and it would be unjust to leave me so unhappy: this hurts me more than anything else. Do not cast me aside like old broken iron, I shall be sound enough if thou lovest me. And even were I broken to bits I should have the more need of help and comfort. In the midst of thy prosperity remember my misfortunes. Generous hearts and true friends act thus; and my old affection and well-tried fidelity merit it. Time will pass. It would be a great restorative after so many troubles which I

<sup>1</sup> Luigi Pulci was born in Florence on August 15, 1432, of Jacopo Pulci and Brigida de' Bardi. His brothers Luca and Bernardo were also poets, and Bernardo's wife Antonia was a poetess of some repute. Luca went into trade but failed, and died in gaol in 1470, leaving his widow and children dependent on his brothers. Luigi, an intimate friend of the Medici family, wrote *La Giostra* (sometimes attributed to his brother Luca) to celebrate the tournament held by Lorenzo de' Medici in honour of the marriage of Braccio Martelli, but really of Lucrezia Donati just before his marriage with Clarice Orsini. The poem *Driades* was first published under the pseudonym of Lucio Pulcro in Florence in 1479, but the later editions bear his name. His greatest work, less read than it deserves, *Morgante Maggiore*, was, as Mr. Armstrong says, a growth rather than a composition. Stanzas were recited at table, and Lucrezia de' Medici urged him to collect them into an epic poem. Besides being a poet, Luigi Pulci was an acute and clever politician, often employed by Lorenzo in missions to foreign courts. He died in 1484, probably at Padua whilst on the road to Venice.

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have now unjustly suffered for sixteen months. It will prevent me from going to the devil, or into exile in strange lands with strange thoughts. *Denique*, by all the Gods, by everything, I pray thee to include me among the number of thy elected for Rome; it will be enough, as I said before, if thou lendest me a horse. If thou dost not want me, I will never more be thine nor any one's. So good-bye. I leave thee for a long time, thou wilt not see me again, nor wilt thou know where I am, and God will pardon thee for me, for I will never pardon thee. Also, if thou wilt, surely some means can be found for my security. The magistrates can protect me, and if they set me free, as would only be just, a safe-conduct voted by six of the Signori would be sufficient, or it would be enough if the creditors promised thee not to molest me. But thou hast forgotten me and art occupied, and thy mind is set on greater things. Thou art right, but also, certes, I am not in the wrong to trust in thee alone, because I am entirely thine and turn to thee as I have always done. If thou dost not help me I have lost all hope. What am I to do? Give myself to three hundred thousand devils?

If thou hast not received the swords tell me and I will go and wake the man up; and if thou wilt send me a line written by thee, so that I may know whether thou still lovest me or not, I should be very glad. Many times have I taken my pen in hand for love of thee, so I wish thou wouldst deign do the same for love of me. This alone will be to me, among these mountains, what the Holy Ghost was to the Apostles who thought God had forgotten them until the dove came to them. If thou dost not do it no more verses, no more gossipings, never more shall we be boon-companions. Tell me whether the affair we talked about under the Tetto de' Pisani is concluded and whether it will be necessary; thou hast probably already tried a portion of it. Commend me to our Magnificent Piero and to Madonna Lucrezia, and greet and bless my Giuliano a thousand times, and also my Piero Allamanni and



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Berlinghieri and Braccio and Gismondo, and all our friends, not forgetting Messer Gentile.—At Vernia, February 1, 1465 (1466).  
THY LUIGI, as content as he can be.<sup>1</sup>

PIERO DE' MEDICI *to his son LORENZO at Rome*

I am in such affliction and sorrow for the sad and untimely death of the Illustrious Duke of Milan that I know not where I am; thou canst imagine what it means to us both in private and in public matters. Condole most heartily in my name with his ambassador, and take comfort in thine own thoughts and do not give way to melancholy, which is of no service; thoughts are sometimes useful when they are good. I, although it is a hard blow, am trying to bear it and I hope time will accomplish what as yet reason cannot. There are letters from Milan of the 9th and the 10th which I send, so that thou canst see how things are there. They may perhaps turn out better than many people think. I wrote at once to the Holy Father to beg him, as head and leader not only of the League but of all Christians, to think how best to preserve the stability of that State, for His Holiness can do more than any one else, if only for the preservation of peace and tranquillity in Italy. Although I think His Holiness is well disposed yet we must do our utmost, for thou knowest what we owe and what is our duty to the blessed memory of the late Lord and towards Her Excellency Madonna and her noble children. Put an end to all playing on instruments, or singing or dancing, for Malatesta has arrived, so let all be at least until after Easter. Do not talk about it because I think we may have to change our plans. But thou shalt know what I decide; meanwhile keep silence with all save Giovanni [Tornabuoni] and Malatesta.

I see that thou hast arrived safely by thy letter of 8th, of which I am glad, and that great honours were paid thee, for

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere di Luigi Pulci a Lorenzo il Magnifico*, Nelle Nozze della Volpe Zambrini, p. 6. Salvatore Bonghi, Lucca, 1868.

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which we must be grateful to God and to the men of this world to whom we owe much. Thou must study to merit this by deeds and be old beyond thine years, for the times require it.

Of what happens there day by day, as I said before, take counsel with Giovanni, and study the condition of that region and what state it is in, so that on thy return thou canst give a clear report. No more at present. Christ guard thee.

I forgot to say that last night letters of the 11th came from Mantua, saying how that lord had agreed and stipulated to remain in the service of King Ferrante [of Naples]; this is a good and useful thing. We have also letters of the 11th to-day from Genoa, with news that all those citizens have determined to be faithful to Madonna and her children as they were to the Duke of blessed memory, and that they have elected eight citizens to act with the governor in case of need. —Florence, March 15, 1465 (1466).<sup>1</sup>

### PIERO DE' MEDICI to his son LORENZO at Rome

I wrote fully to thee lately, and now have thy letter of 15th saying that the death of the Duke of Milan was known there, may God be merciful to him, and of the arrangements made to send to Milan and to write to others, and also of the Holy Father's decision as to the safety of that State, which satisfies every one. We are of the same opinion; to do all that is possible for the Illustrious Madonna and their noble children that accords with our own liberty. Probably nothing more will be needed than the intimation of our intentions, as up to the 17th, the last news I have from Milan, nothing had happened, all passed off quietly. From what one hears from Venice the Signoria there shows a desire to live in peace and quiet with Madonna and her sons, as they did with the father of blessed memory. I am inclined to believe this, it being their interest. I say no more, having told thee enough in my other letter, and

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, op. cit. ii. 47.

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also because I send thee the letter I have received from Venice. It is however of the greatest importance and utility that His Sanctity our Holy Father should desire to preserve peace and quiet in Italy, in which I conceive he will have the aid of us all. I am sure that this is his desire, he having always shown it, so I do not dwell on it, hoping that by the grace of God and the help of His Holiness everything will go well.

I note that thou hast seen His Sanctity the Pope, and spoken about the affair of Stefano da Osimo, and that His Holiness is satisfied; it is necessary for the common good of the different parties and of the whole city, and it seems to me that our Holy Father has understood rightly and sagely that the affair cannot be ended but must be maintained. It may be that time will make a change also in my views. It is enough to know that it was not *de motu proprio* of His Holiness, but was suggested by others. But above all see that he is satisfied and content; were it otherwise I should be uneasy.

I know not what thou hast done about the deposit of alum, as I said before I am content that thou shouldst accept it in my name, and there can be no doubt that our conduct will be to the satisfaction and the interest of our Holy Father. Consult about this with Giovanni Tornabuoni, and settle this and other matters as you both think best.

About continuing thy journey beyond Rome I think, as I said before, it would be better to wait until after Easter; we shall meanwhile know more and be better able to decide. Thou hast done well to urge Messer Agnolo to make haste, we expect him here every day. Return the letters from Milan which I sent in my last letter, and those which I now send. Here we are expecting to hear of the entry of the Illustrious Galeazzo Maria. The Count of Urbino was at Scarperia on the 18th but did not come here, probably not to lose time. By now he must be at Milan, as well as the Lord Alessandro. Thou shalt hear what occurs. The Lord Gismondo had arrived at Venice.

## PIERO DI COSIMO DE' MEDICI

The Archdeacon was at the point of death, but he is so much better that it is not expected he will die of this illness. I highly approve of thy thought of Pellegrino, and if the occasion had arisen would have shown him how greatly I desire to please and to serve him. When thou seest the Bishop of Raugia commend me to him, and also to Messer Lionardo Dati. No more. Christ guard thee.—On the 22nd day of March 1465 (1466).<sup>1</sup>

After the conspiracy against Piero de' Medici had been discovered, Agnolo Acciaiuoli fled to Siena on his way to Naples. There he waited some time in the vain hope that Piero would relent and permit him to return to Florence. At last he wrote the following letter, which as given by Fabroni, who copied from the archives, differs somewhat from the more literary version given by Machiavelli.

AGNOLO ACCIAIUOLI to PIERO DE' MEDICI.

*Siena, 17th Sept. 1466*

*Spectabilis vir Frater honorande*,—I laugh at what I see. God has put it in thy power to cancel all the debts I have against thee, and thou dost not know how to do it. I lost my country and my estates for thy father, thou art in the position to restore all to me. I prevented his being despoiled, now corn and other belongings are taken from me; thou canst save them; be not tardy in showing thou art not ungrateful; I do not say this for my belongings, although I have need of them, so much as for thy reputation. I commend myself to thee.<sup>2</sup>

PIERO DE' MEDICI to AGNOLO ACCIAIUOLI.

*Florence, 22nd Sept. 1466*

*Magnifice eques tanquam Pater honorande*,—Your laughter is the cause of my not shedding tears, although I am sorry for

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, op. cit. ii. 49.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. 36.

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

your ill fortune. You have not shown your accustomed good sense, which in such cases is necessary. Your guilt, as I said in a former letter, is manifest and so great that neither my intercession nor that of any other person would be of any avail. My nature is to forget and forgive you, and all who have shown me enmity and hostility. I have pardoned every offence; the Republic cannot and may not lightly do so on account of the bad example, as you know better than I, having had experience of such matters and having proclaimed it in public and in private. You say you were exiled on my father's account, and for having saved what belonged to him. I do not deny your friendship with my father and with us, which ought to have made you regard me as a son, and as such I considered myself. You were banished with my father and were recalled with him, according to the pleasure of the Republic, which has full power over us. I do not conceive that our friendship was in any way hurtful or dishonourable to you as can be clearly demonstrated, and if obligations and benefits were weighed, perhaps the scale would not be equal, although from what you write you do not seem to think so. I always considered myself beholden to you, but if you examine your conscience you will see that you have exempted me from any obligations; nevertheless I am willing to remain your debtor in so far as it touches me privately, but the public injury I cannot, will not, and may not pardon. For myself personally I forget everything, forgive all wrongs, and remain as a son ought to be towards such a father.<sup>1</sup>

In 1466 Piero de' Medici's daughter Nannina was married to Bernardo Rucellai, son of Giovanni, who built the beautiful palazzo Rucellai after the designs of his friend Leon Battista Alberti. Giovanni spent 3686 golden florins on the festivities for his son's wedding, and for three days the Florentines danced, ate, drank and listened to music, in Via della Vigna Nuova. The street, and the loggia (one of the few still existing in

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, op. cit. ii. 36.



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Florence), which was temporarily enlarged so as to cover the small triangular square in front of the palace, were hung with blue cloth and decorated with flowers. One of Nannina's sons, Giovanni, is well known as the author of *Rosmunda* and of *Le Api*, the poetical gifts of Lucrezia thus descending to a second generation.

LUIGI PULCI, *from Pisa, to LORENZO DE' MEDICI*  
*at Florence*

*Salve, &c.* I send thee some poems so that thou mayst remember me. I have a thousand phantasies in my head which thou shalt hear some day and which will please thee. The poem is nearly finished; then we must do a more important work, and perhaps three nymphs, who are here, will come to be judged by a better man than Paris, and we will bestow the prize to our liking. Whoever is ill pleased shall pay the expenses of a ball; but I mean to prepare a triumph which shall be praised by thee and that for me is always sufficient.

I have nought to say save that I am thine as ever. *Scriptum est.* Commend me to the Magnificent Piero and to Madonna Lucrezia, and to all at home. *Salutem Vale, et me dilige.*—From Pisa, January 12, 1466 (1467). *Tuus servitor,*  
ALOYIUS PULCHER.

This day Tanai<sup>1</sup> and his wife with about a hundred horse entered Pisa in great triumph, and *Palle* resounded everywhere; we shall amuse ourselves and talk much of thee.<sup>2</sup>

Several brides had been proposed for Lorenzo, and at last Piero decided for a daughter of the proud house of Orsini. The suggestion was first made by his brother-in-law Giovanni Tornabuoni, head of the Medici bank at Rome, and treasurer to Sixtus IV. But Lucrezia insisted on seeing the girl with her

<sup>1</sup> Probably Tanai, son of Vieri de' Medici.

<sup>2</sup> *Lettere di Luigi Pulci*, op. cit., p. 26. The *Palle* are the balls in the Medici arms, and the people saluted the Medici by shouting "*Palle, Palle.*"



## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

own eyes before coming to a final decision, and in March 1467 set out for Rome, from whence she wrote to her husband :

### LUCREZIA DE' MEDICI to her husband PIERO

On the way I wrote to thee often and told thee about the roads. I arrived on Thursday, and was received with much joy by Giovanni, as thou canst imagine. I have had thy letter of the 21st which consoled me greatly, hearing that the pains had ceased. But every day seems to me a year until I return for thy and my consolation.

On the way to S. Peter on Thursday morning I met Madonna Maddalena Orsini, sister to the Cardinal [Latino Orsini], with her daughter, who is about fifteen or sixteen years old. She was dressed in the Roman fashion with a *lenzuolo* [long loose shawl or cloak]. In this dress she seemed to me handsome, fair, and tall, but being so covered up I could not see her to my satisfaction. Yesterday I paid a visit to the said Monsignor Orsini in his sister's house, which adjoins his. When I had saluted him in thy name his sister came in with the maiden, who had on a tight frock of the fashion of Rome without the *lenzuolo*. We talked for some time and I looked closely at the girl. As I said she is of good height and has a nice complexion, her manners are gentle, though not so winning as those of our girls, but she is very modest and would soon learn our customs. She has not fair hair, because here there are no fair women ; her hair is reddish and abundant, her face rather round, but it does not displease me. Her throat is fairly elegant, but it seems to me a little meagre, or to speak better, slight. Her bosom I could not see, as here the women are entirely covered up, but it appeared to me of good proportions. She does not carry her head proudly like our girls, but pokes it a little forward ; I think she was shy, indeed I see no fault in her save shyness. Her hands are long and delicate. In short I think the girl is much above the common, though

## PIERO DI COSIMO DE' MEDICI

she cannot compare with Maria, Lucrezia, and Bianca.<sup>1</sup> Lorenzo has seen her and thou canst find out whether she pleases him. Whatever thou and he determine will be well done, and I shall be content. Let us leave the issue to God.

The girl's father is Signor Jacopo Orsini of Monte Rotondo, and her mother is the Cardinal's sister. She has two brothers; one a soldier in the good graces of Signor Orso, the other a priest, sub-deacon of the Pope. They own the half of Monte Rotondo, the other half belongs to their uncle, who has two sons and three daughters. Besides this there are three other castles belonging to her brothers, and as far as I can learn they are otherwise well provided. They will be still better off in the future because besides the Cardinal, the Archbishop, Napoleon, and the Cavalier, being their uncles on the mother's side, they are cousins through the father, who is a second cousin in direct line of the aforesaid gentlemen, and they are all very fond of them. This is what I have heard. If before treating this matter it seems well to thee to await our return do as thou thinkest best.

I intend to leave on Monday week and shall write on the way. So I shall be at home at the time fixed. I pray God in His mercy to guide me safely and to keep thee in good health. I do not write to Madonna Contessina, it seems to me useless. Commend me to her and salute the girls and Lorenzo and Giuliano.—In Rome, 27th March 1467.

THY LUCREZIA.

A few days later Lucrezia wrote again on the subject which engrossed all her thoughts.

### LUCREZIA DE' MEDICI *to her husband* PIERO

As I told thee in my last letter dictated to Giovanni, our seeing the girl was managed quietly, without ceremony; so

<sup>1</sup> Her own daughters.

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should nothing come of it thou wilt lose nought, as there has been no parleying. The maiden has two good qualities, she is tall and fair; her face is not pretty, but it is not common, and her figure is good. Lorenzo has seen her, find out whether she pleases him, there are so many advantages that if he likes her we may be content. Her name is Crarice.

THY LUCREZIA.

Like a true Florentine, Lucrezia turns the *l* in Clarice into an *r*. Lorenzo had seen the girl without her mother's knowledge one day at mass. On the homeward journey Lucrezia writes in answer to a letter from her husband :

### LUCREZIA DE' MEDICI to her husband PIERO

I have thy letter by Donnino and see the determination thou hast taken, which pleases me. I am sure when I get home and tell thee all thou wilt be well-satisfied, particularly as Lorenzo is pleased. We did not see the girl again, but that does not surprise me. Thou sayest I write coldly about her: I do it not to raise thy hopes too high: there is no handsomer girl at present unmarried in Florence. On my return I will tell thee all, and as I said before we shall be able to arrange matters, so at present I will say no more. I arrived here very tired, the road was so bad, and we had so much rain that little was left of me, but after resting I am well. We were to have left on Monday, but it does nothing but rain, so they have persuaded me to wait a little. All is ready, and as soon as the weather is favourable we shall start, for it seems to me a thousand years since I left. I commend myself unto thee.—April 1, 1467.

THY LUCREZIA.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Tre Letter di Lucrezia Tornabuoni a Piero de' Medici*, Ricordo di Nozze, Cesare Guasti. Firenze, 1859.

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The long journey and the damp told on Lucrezia who was never strong, and at Foligno she fell seriously ill.

### LUCREZIA DE' MEDICI *to her husband* PIERO

I know not, she writes, whether it is thanks to these doctors or to thy letter received last night, but this morning I felt so well that I hope to set forth in three days. Maestro Girolamo will tell thee exactly the state of my health, which I think will content thee. I only lament the many annoyances I have caused thee on my journey. But believe me, wherever I might have been I should have been ill, for I have brought up much phlegm and nastiness which must have been there for a long time. Commend me to Mona Contessina and beg her to have patience, for soon, as soon as it pleases these doctors, I shall return to her and maybe she will take better care of me, though here, thanks be to God, I have wanted for nothing. I know not whether I should even have had such conveniences at home, certainly not at Rome. If it seems good to thee that I should send back Messer Gentile for Giuliano let me know before we start.<sup>1</sup> I shall wait to get quite well as thou sayest, and to recoup. Meanwhile and always I commend myself to thee and beg thee to be patient with me.—In Foligno, May 4, 1467, at 1 o'clock.

THY LUCREZIA.

Yesterday and last night I slept, as the Maestro will have told thee, as though quite well.<sup>2</sup>

After her return to Florence the doctors sent Lucrezia early in September to Bagno a Morba, a place already mentioned in earlier pages. But here, where several letters are

<sup>1</sup> Gentile Becchi, tutor to Lorenzo and Giuliano, afterwards Bishop of Arezzo.

<sup>2</sup> *Lucrezia Tornabuoni, Donna di Piero de' Medici*, Studio da G. Levantini-Pieronì. Firenze, 1888.

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given written by Lucrezia from that celebrated spring, a few words may be added on the bathing habits of the fifteenth century to show how large a part they played in the social life of the time. For it is a delusion to think that the frequent use of water, cold or hot, is a modern virtue. It is true that from the middle of the sixteenth century till the end of the eighteenth men and women washed but sparingly. Marguerite de Valois could say to her lover, "See these fair hands. Though they have not been washed for eight days, they are cleaner than yours." Manuals of Etiquette, published in 1667 and in 1782, recommend ladies and gentlemen to clean their faces with a dry white linen cloth, because to wash the face with water makes it more susceptible to cold in winter and to tan in summer. But in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the use of water was nearly as common as it is now. The whole population, whether north or south of the Alps, rejoiced in bathing. They used cold baths, hot baths, and steam baths; they gathered to bathe in mineral water; above all they delighted in baths when the water came from hot springs, and those were most prized which were strongly impregnated with sulphur, as was the case at Morba. The site of many an Italian monastery was selected simply because it was near enough a hot spring for the monks to enjoy what was looked on almost as necessary to healthy living. Indeed one of the punishments inflicted on unruly members of the community was a prohibition to use the bath. The Italian doctors distinguished between *Stupha*, or hot air, and *Balneum*, or hot water baths. Rubbing and even scratching whilst bathing was recommended, and Arnaldo di Villa Nuova (1300-1366) ordered his elderly patients to be well rubbed when in the water, and to take a herb-bath four times a month. Soap, and sometimes lye, was used, and Italian soap was in great request, particularly in Germany.

The hot sulphur springs of Morba had been known for centuries, and belonged to the Commune of Volterra, as is mentioned in a document of 1297. They lie some ten miles south of the old Etruscan city, in that part of the Apennines dominated by the imposing Monte Cerbole, in a region which then and now produced borax and alum. The wild desolate scenery gave rise to legends. It was said that on stormy nights a fiery chariot drawn by fiery horses rushes along the



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mountain side, and then with a terrific noise which drowns thunder and wind, dashes down into the valley leading to the lagoons of Larderello, which were supposed to be the mouths of hell, and disappears. After the apparition of the chariot, the jets of white sulphureous smoke which always rise more or less from the grey soil are more dense and hiss like great serpents as they curl upwards to the sky. It is altogether an uncanny place. Here and there the black mud bubbles and boils, rising up in small cones which subside with a strange rumbling noise like the hoarse barking or growling of a distant watchdog. The ground sounds hollow under foot, and shakes if you walk near any of the blowholes, while the smell of rotten eggs, so characteristic of sulphur springs, is overpowering, particularly after rain.

The famous baths are not far off. They had been largely deserted, conduits broken, bathing-houses tumbling down, everything neglected and falling to ruin. The sulphureous springs, left to find their way through the rocks and the soil, were wasted and produced nothing but evil-smelling ooze. When the Florentines became masters of Volterra they sent Doctor Ugolino da Montecatini with their Chancellor Colucci da Salutati to report on the virtues of the waters in 1388. Something was done to render the baths useful and productive. The village with its small castle was rebuilt and surrounded with a sheltering wall. Visitors were protected from the sudden assaults of the robber nobles whose castles crowned neighbouring heights, and who swooped down on the bathers in hopes of plunder and ransom. The baths regained some of their old prosperity, and gouty or rheumatic Florentines braved the discomforts of the road to make use of the waters. Cosimo Pater Patriæ visited them frequently, and on a memorable occasion a favourite pair of scissors were left in his lodgings, which Contessina tells her son Giovanni to send back to Florence (p. 55). The probability is, however, that the arrangements were anything but luxurious when Lucrezia first tried and found the benefits of the healing springs.

She soon saw the advantages of the position, and after buying the village and baths of Morba in 1477 from the Commune of Florence, in true Florentine fashion at once made plans which would benefit the place, its visitors, her



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own health, and her pocket. The valuable water was largely wasted; cisterns were needed; more springs might be discovered. Accordingly experts were engaged, the ground was investigated, and work was carefully planned. The known springs were cleared, the water was carefully collected and brought into a great covered cistern built of well-burnt bricks and covered with tiles according to the most approved pattern of the day. Search was made for other springs; the streamlets were followed back to their sources in neighbouring rocks. Soon the supply of water was more than doubled. Meanwhile the bathing-houses with their twelve separate baths were rebuilt. Old engravings enable us to form some idea of these Italian baths, which were made much more luxurious than those north of the Alps. There is no trace of that promiscuous bathing so common in Germany. Either the sexes had separate bathing-houses or, what is more probable, used the same baths at different hours. We see a room with one or more oblong baths set in the floor, and to each bathroom was attached a smaller apartment with a bed for the hour of repose enjoined after bathing. The bathing establishment was a long row of such bathrooms completely separate from each other. At first the same stream of water served all the baths at Morba, but it was found that those nearest the cisterns were too hot, while those furthest from them were too cold. The defect was remedied by an ingenious system of conduits. Provision was made in each bathroom for shower or douche baths, the water being conducted along the walls in open gutters pierced with holes above each wooden tub. Lucrezia also built a large house which served as an hotel and, as at Cauterets—the favourite bathing resort of Marguerite d'Angoulême, the Queen of Navarre, where there was a *Maison du Roi*, while the other bathers lived in *cabanes et logis*—there was a “small palace” for her own use and that of her family. It must have been a thorough holiday for the energetic and busy woman, for, as the Queen of Navarre said, “while at the baths one must live as free from care as a child.”

Lorenzo accompanied his mother to Morba, but there was a report which seems to have been well founded, though Piero in his letter to her treats it as an idle dream, that the Florentine exiles had resolved to attack the place and capture both

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mother and son. So Lucrezia invented some pretext to send him back to Florence, and the family doctor prevented his return. It will be noticed that although children in those days spoke of their parents by their Christian names, yet they almost always wrote *voi* (you) in addressing them. Only husband and wife and parents used the familiar *tu* (thou). *Lei*, now universally used to all but near relations or great friends, is never met with.

### LORENZO DE' MEDICI to his mother LUCREZIA at *Bagno a Morba*

I thought I should have been with you by now, but the weather has become much cooler, and Maestro Mariotti does not think it would be good for my eczema to return there. Therefore I have determined not to come. Piero has promised to go and see you either with Messer Benedetto or soon afterwards. Let us find that you are so improved in health that nothing more will be necessary. We are all well here, particularly Piero, whose only need is to hear oftener about you; in truth, whether from the negligence of the writer or perhaps of the messenger, till now we have had but scant news. Therefore to satisfy us all, more particularly Piero, see that we get your answers more quickly, and apply yourself diligently to benefit from your sojourn there. I commend myself to you.—In Florence on the 19th day of September 1467.

I should be glad if you send me back my purple *cioppetta* (tunic) as I have nought to wear, the other things I do not want.

YOUR LORENZO DE' MEDICI.<sup>1</sup>

### PIERO DE' MEDICI to his wife LUCREZIA at Morba

I wrote to thee a few days ago, and soon afterwards Lorenzo arrived. It was wiser to send him away from there,

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Med. Miscellanea*, p. 6.

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although I think they are all dreams. From him and also from thy letter to Mona Contessina I learn that thou art better, so I hope for thy complete recovery, which is indeed certain. It cannot be otherwise after the prayers and supplications which have been and are being made in places some of which thou knowest, and in others which thou knowest not. But what must be attributed to the grace of God is that prayers have been made by those who know us not, and whom thou hast never known : a wonderful thing truly, more divine than human, and I steadfastly believe that owing to these prayers we shall receive grace from God : but as thou in thy wisdom knoweth we shall remain deeply in debt. God make us grateful and send us the power to satisfy all. Have faith and be obedient to the doctors, do not depart one drachm from their commands, submit and suffer all things, if not for thyself and for us, for the love of God who shows He will help us. Attend to nought but to the reason for which thou art there . . .<sup>1</sup> give no thought to us, for we are well and want for nothing . . .<sup>1</sup> return well, in better health than when thou wentest . . .<sup>1</sup> are prosperous, and there is good hope of peace. Giovanni Tornabuoni, if it pleases God, leaves for Rome to-morrow. Do not trouble to write if thou canst not. Nought else.—  
October 1, 1467. PIERO DI COSIMO DE' MEDICIS.<sup>2</sup>

LORENZO DE' MEDICI *to his mother* LUCREZIA *at*  
*Bagno a Morba*

I have your letter and am most grieved to hear that your pains have returned, but as you say they are not so severe I do hope that this time they will take leave of you, and depart for good. Please God it may be so, also in the future. I wrote to you that Giovanni had to go ; he went on Saturday ; but

<sup>1</sup> Illegible.

<sup>2</sup> *Lucrezia Tornabuoni, &c., op. cit.*

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he could not pass by Bagno a Morba because he was obliged to leave in great haste; so he will not do as I said.

I have been too long absent and therefore I shall not be able, as I wished, to come and see you again, and you will probably not remain there long. Please God that you return in good health, as you and we hope. We are all well, Piero especially, and we long to see you soon, and as we trust well. I commend myself unto you.—In Florence, October 4, 1467.

YOUR LORENZO DE' MEDICI.<sup>1</sup>

CONTESSINA DE' MEDICI *to her daughter-in-law*  
LUCREZIA *at Bagno a Morba*

DEAREST AS A DAUGHTER,—This morning I received thy letter by which with great joy I learn that thou art better, for this we must give thanks to God and pray with all our hearts that He may restore thee to perfect health. From Piero I hear continually about thee, so thou must not tire thyself by writing to me. I sent back by the messenger the spices asked for, and I received the knives, which shall be looked to. Do not worry about Ginevra, for I have arranged and will continue to arrange for her family. The visits in thy name to Laudomina<sup>2</sup> have been paid and all that was necessary has been done. She is very discontented although it was a boy. Here all are well, thanks be to God. I hope it is the same with all of you. No more at present.—October 25, 1467.

MONA CONTESSINA.<sup>3</sup>

PIERO DE' MEDICI *to his wife* LUCREZIA *at Bagno a Morba*

LUCREZIA MINE,—As I know thou wilt understand the letter I have written to Niccolò I shall not write to thee at length;

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., Filza lxxx.

<sup>2</sup> Daughter of Agnolo Acciaiuoli, married to Pier Francesco de' Medici.

<sup>3</sup> Archivio, &c., Filza xxi. No. 55.

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also because thy return is nigh at hand, which I await with infinite longing. I enclose a letter from the Illustrious Madonna Duchess, thou wilt understand what she says. Show it to Messer Benedetto. See how much we are beholden to her. We must give thanks to Almighty God, and also to her when the time comes. No more at present. Christ give thee health.—At Florence on the 12th day of November 1467, at the fifth hour.

PIERO DI COSIMO DE' MEDICI.<sup>1</sup>

### LUIGI PULCI *from Pisa to* LORENZO DE' MEDICI *at Florence*

*Salve amicissime*, &c.,—I have been delayed, and shall remain here several days. I know not whether Tomaso Capponi or my Bernardo<sup>2</sup> will ask thee to help them about that business; if they do I beg thee to do so, as is thy wont. If my presence is necessary let me know. Anyhow I shall come on Saturday, but if I am wanted I am always ready to leave everything at thy bidding.

If Gualterotto has not replied about my dog, or if his reply calls for another letter, I beg thee as warmly as ever I begged for anything to answer.

On Friday the Illustrious Duke of Calabria and the Magnificent Luigi de' Pulci talked of thee all day long, and said much ill. Thou hast gained great honour by thy letter given to him by the Captain, he has followed thy advice, and told me what an admirable letter it was; so the Captain and he have made a warm friendship. On Sunday night I sup here with him, and the Captain has charged me to thank thee by letter and by word of mouth, so he has not written. As I do now by letter, so will I also do later with my tongue.

The Illustrious Duke spoke to me about the festival of St. John which he is most desirous to see, and he charged me

<sup>1</sup> *Lucrezia Tornabuoni, &c., op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Luigi Pulci's brother.



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to tell thee to help him and to order that it shall be a fine festival, and said many other things which I cannot now repeat or give thee to understand, as said Betto della Centina.

I have no more to say save that I commend myself to thee. Salute our Dionigio from me, and tell him this letter is not from Pini,<sup>1</sup> and that he is to think of me at Pietra al Migliaio. If there is any fear that the wine should be finished ere I arrive with his own hand he must measure what remains in the butt, and keep two flasks against my return, for if I thought I was not to see it any more I should be in despair.—Pisa, May 30, 1468. *Vale.*

THY LUIGI PULCI.<sup>2</sup>

### LUIGI PULCI at Pisa to LORENZO DE' MEDICI

If thou dost not wish it to be known or thought that I am thy friend and can have all I want from thee, cause it to be published everywhere at thy expense. As I have had no money to spend I have spent (traded on) thy reputation. Here I am pointed at wherever I go: that is Lorenzo's great friend. Therefore three peasants from Buti will come to thee, certain Giovanni and Piero and Mariano of Buti, friends of Piero Vespucci; they have some business about which he has written and I am requested to recommend them to thee. For love of me be good to them, for it would give me much pleasure, either with a promise, or hand them over to whomever thou wilt: only help them in some way. I will then inscribe it in the book of benefits and obligations I owe thee.

No more, I commend myself to thee as usual. God be with thee. *Vale et me dilige.*—From Pisa, May 31, 1468.

On Sunday evening the Duke and I shall be together. If I am to tell him aught from thee let me know.

THY LUIGI DE' PULCI.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the Mugello where Luigi Pulci owned a small property.

<sup>2</sup> *Lettere di Luigi Pulci*, op. cit. 31.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



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CARDINAL LATINO ORSINI to PIERO DE' MEDICI

*Magnifice vir, affinis tanquam frater carissime, salutem,*—With great joy we have signed what our Johanni Tornabuoni brought us from you. I hope, thanks be to God, that this thing will conduce to the well-being of your house and of ours, for it pleases us old people, also the youth and the maiden, and indeed all. We should be glad to see our nephew Lorenzo, or *saltem* his brother, at the feast of the Nativity. We should give him a magnificent, a quiet, or a middling reception, according to your wishes, for we only desire to please you in this: and you may rest assured that all we have is at your disposal and pleasure. Be careful, I beg of you, to keep well and joyful, thus nought will be wanting to you or to us.—*Ex Urbe, die 26 Novembris 1468.*

L. CARDINALIS DE URSINUS,  
*Manu propria, Episcopus Tusculanus.*<sup>1</sup>

FILIPPO DE' MEDICI, *Archbishop of Pisa, at Rome, to*  
PIERO DE' MEDICI

*Magnifice vir, tanquam pater honorande, post commendationem, &c.,*—By Giovanni Tornabuoni I received your letter, and he has given me the message from Your Magnificence. It pleases me mightily; I do not think that in these times Your Magnificence could have done better. I could not be better pleased or more gratified, considering that it is for the benefit and the common good of all; therefore I congratulate Your Magnificence. And that Your Magnificence may be amply informed about everything, although I know you will hear all from Giovanni, nevertheless it is my duty to tell you that this very day, in the name of God, everything has been concluded. The reason why the contract is not *per verba de presenti* is that

<sup>1</sup> *Tre Lettere di Lucrezia, &c., op. cit.*

## PIERO DI COSIMO DE' MEDICI

Monsignore [Cardinal Orsini] does not wish it to be divulged, therefore we send a sketch of the contract according to his desire ; the one sent to us was simple enough. Everything has been agreed to in the following fashion, *videlicet* : That they give a dower of 6000 Roman florins in money, jewels, and dresses ; which they stipulate should return to their heirs should she not have children or dispose of it by will. They agree that you should not give her the fourth part of the dower, as is customary here ; and in this and all other matters, the Florentine usage and custom is to be followed save in the restitution of the dower if she dies *sine filiis et intestata*. Thus neither the custom here nor the custom there will be absolutely adhered to, so that both parties will be content. I have been present at all the arrangements, and they seem to me honest and reasonable ; for you do not need her fortune, and your own remains to you. It is but reasonable that they should have their way in something.

Magnificent Piero, I value the connection much, but they are even more desirous and glad to be related to you. Of a truth their pleasure is not to be described. This must be a satisfaction to you, and every day, if it pleases God, you will be better satisfied, and we also ; for truly if I had a hundred tongues I could not tell Your Magnificence how pleased I am. Send the contract soon, for it will be impossible to keep this affair secret, as Pietro d'Arcangelo, chancellor of the Duke of Urbino, has spoken of it, and these Pazzi have begun to spread the news.

You have not sent the letters I asked Your Magnificence for ; probably because you had letters from the King to send here concerning the affair about which I wrote. If you have them it would be well to send them as I can assure Your Magnificence that if the friend takes up the business I have good hopes of success. Whatever Your Magnificence does in this and other matters about which I shall write will be well done, as I am certain that Your Magnificence values my well-

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being and my honour as much as I do myself. I commend myself to Your Magnificence, *et quam Deus felicem conservet.*—

Rome, November 27, 1468. *Magnificentie Vestres,*

*Filius* PHY. ARCHIEPISCOPUS PISANUS,

*manus propria.*

I said above that I had good hopes if the letters are sent, not because I rely on the benevolence of him who is to do the affair, but because he, if he wishes to gain a place, must give his companion a share, who will either do nothing or be obliged to act according to the will of the other. But he has a great desire to succeed, and will not give heed to what people say, and therefore will not care much for those who may claim their share at any cost. The afore-mentioned affair [the marriage] has not been announced yet to our Lord the Pope, because it did not seem good to Monsignore to do so before the contract is here.<sup>1</sup>

Francesco Tornabuoni, Lorenzo de' Medici's uncle, who together with his brother Giovanni was in the Medici bank at Rome, did his best to inspire his nephew with love for the girl suggested by Giovanni as his bride by writing flowery descriptions of her.

FRANCESCO TORNABUONI *to his nephew*

LORENZO DE' MEDICI

Not a day passes that I do not see your Madonna Clarice, who has bewitched me: she improves every day. She is beautiful, she has the sweetest of manners and an admirable intelligence. It is about eight days since she began to learn to dance, and each day she learns a new one; no sooner is it shown her than she knows it. Master Agnolo had begged her to write to you with her own hand, but nothing would induce

<sup>1</sup> *Tre Lettere di Lucrezia Tornabuoni*, op. cit.

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her to do so. Then I begged of her, and she said she would, only she told me you were evidently extremely occupied with this tournament; and then arrived Donnino who brought no letter from you. As you cannot visit her in person at least write to her often, it would give her great pleasure. Of a truth you have the most perfect bride in Italy.—January 4, 1469.

YOUR FRANCESCO DI FILIPPO TORNABUONI in Rome.

Francesco's letter had the desired effect, and Lorenzo wrote to his bride. Unfortunately his letters are not to be found. Her answers are touching in their girlish simplicity, but they show that Clarice, brought up in strictly clerical surroundings, was not the woman to captivate the brilliant, rather sceptical Lorenzo.

### CLARICE ORSINI to LORENZO DE' MEDICI

*Magnifico consorte, recommandatione, &c.*,—I have received a letter from you and have understood all you write. That you liked my letter rejoices me, as I am always desirous to do what pleases you. Then you say that you write but little; I am content with whatever is your pleasure, living always in hope for the future. Madonna, my mother, sends you her blessing. I beg you to commend me to your and my father, to your and my mother, and to the others you deem right. I always commend myself to you.—At Rome the 28th day of January 1469.

YOUR CLARICE DE URSINUS.

### FRANCESCO TORNABUONI to LORENZO DE' MEDICI, *his nephew*

In the name of God, on the 16th day of February 1469.

*Magnifice vir et maior honorandissime*,—This day letters from Giovanni have come, saying how you jousted in the tourna-

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ment, and that Your Magnificence was unhurt and had achieved great honour. As soon as I heard the news, I went to tell your Madonna Clarice, and took her a letter from Giovanni, which gave her more pleasure than I can describe. For four days she has been sad by reason of her fear for Your Magnificence in the tournament, she also had a slight headache; as soon as she heard the news the headache disappeared and she was quite merry. Of Madonna Maddalena [Orsini] I say nought, for it is impossible to say how contented and happy she is; the only thing she desires is that you should come here for Lent, for she says she wants you to see your merchandise before you take it home: it improves every day. Enclosed you will find a letter from her. Madonna Clarice would not write, and she bids me say from her that she has a great secret to tell you which she will entrust to no one, neither will she write it for fear the letter should go astray. Indeed she longs to see you, and now the tournament is over you have no valid excuse. She commends herself to Your Magnificence, and to the Magnificent Piero and Madonna Contessina, and to Bianca, Nannina, and Giuliano. I have bought some purple cloth from London for a petticoat *a la romanesca*, which will I think suit her; she intends to visit all the *perdoni* (relics) to pray God for you.

Nought is talked of here but the splendour of the entertainment given by you and especially of your own doings; they say no paladin ever did more than Your Magnificence, and every one rejoices, particularly your friends. Messer Giovanfrancesco, son of the Marquess of Mantua, commends himself to Your Magnificence, and sends you many compliments. I have no more to say at present save to commend myself to Your Magnificence, praying that God may keep you from all ill.

YOUR FRANCESCO DI FILIPPO TORNABUONI, in Rome.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *La Fidanzata di Lorenzo de' Medici*, per nozze Bondi-Levi. Isidoro Del Lungo, 8th July 1897.



# PIERO DI COSIMO DE' MEDICI

CLARICE ORSINI to LORENZO DE' MEDICI

*Magnifice consorte, recommandatione, &c.*,—I have received a letter from you which was most pleasing to me, telling me of the tournament wherein you gained much honour. I am most glad that you have been satisfied in a thing which gives you pleasure; and if my prayers have been granted in this, I, as a person who desires to do something to give you pleasure, am well satisfied. I beg you to commend me to my father Piero, to my mother Lucretia, to Madonna Contessina, and to all others you think right. I commend myself to you. No more.—In Rome the 25th day of February 1469.

YOUR CLARICE DE URSINUS.

The tournament of which Clarice writes was held on February 7, 1469, in honour of the marriage of Lorenzo's great friend, Braccio Martello, and is recorded in a poem by Luigi Pulci.<sup>1</sup> It took place in the Piazza S. Croce, and cost, as Lorenzo notes in his *Ricordi*, 10,000 ducats. This estimate, however, can only refer to the structures and decorations in the Piazza S. Croce, and cannot include the money expended on personal adornment. The dress of Giuliano alone, then a handsome boy of fifteen, was said to have cost 80,000 ducats. It was made of silver brocade strewn with pearls. Lorenzo's, with its jewels, must have cost a great deal more. He rode to the lists on a magnificently caparisoned horse given to him by Ferrante, King of Naples. Over his surcoat he wore a broad silk scarf, with fresh and withered roses embroidered round his motto, *Le Temps Revient*, written in pearls. In his black velvet cap studded with pearls was a feather of gold filagree set with diamonds and rubies, and on his shield were displayed the three golden lilies of France on an azure ground, the privilege of bearing which was granted to his father Piero in 1465 (see p. 86), while in the centre of the shield blazed the great Medici diamond, *Il Libro*. In the Piazza he mounted a charger

<sup>1</sup> *La Giostra di Lorenzo de' Medici*, erroneously attributed by many writers to his brother Luca.



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presented to him by Borso d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, and buckled on armour sent by the Duke of Milan. His prowess is celebrated by Luigi Pulci as rivalling the deeds of Orlando and Achilles, and the first prize, a helmet of silver with a figure of Mars, was assigned to him. Lorenzo more modestly states that he was not well versed in the use of weapons and the delivery of blows.

These Italian tournaments, which we read about so frequently as forming part of the festivities attending weddings among the richer citizens of Florence and other Italian towns, were more processions and pageants than the rough-and-tumble feats of arms among northern nations. At one of the tournaments held during the sitting of the Diet of Augsburg we are told by a spectator that six competitors were killed: at another that Ferdinand, King of the Romans, was thrown violently and his horse rolled on him, endangering his life. We never hear of such accidents attending the tame tournaments of Italy.

### RINALDO ORSINI to LORENZO DE' MEDICI

*Magnifice affinis ac frater honorande, salutem, &c.*,—A few days ago I heard, but not by any letter of yours, of the tournament and the honour done to you. God be praised for all, and especially that you emerged safe and unhurt; in which I think you were aided by the prayers of your Clarice. Now I have been informed of the wishes of the Magnificent Piero and your own as to Clarice's journey to Florence. Although I should have certainly desired, albeit I have not been consulted, that your wishes should be followed in this matter, always subordinate to those of Madonna our mother, who is very sorrowful at her departure, yet it would only have been seemly if I, as well as other people, had been written to about this business, for you have no nearer relation here, nor one who is more desirous to please you in this and in other matters. So when you want an explanation or anything done, write openly to me and I shall do my best to satisfy you. Say also to the Magnificent Piero that in future he is not to apply to middle-men, for he

## PIERO DI COSIMO DE' MEDICI

must dispose of me as he would of a son. *Bene valet.*—Rome, February 26, 1469.

RAINALDUS DE URSINUS,  
*Apostolice Sedis subdiaconus.*<sup>1</sup>

### MADDALENA ORSINI to LORENZO DE' MEDICI

*Magnifice vir, et mi fili benedictę, salutem,*—I have had a letter from you which is most welcome, in which you say that your coming here depends upon the will of the Magnificent Piero and the opinion of his Lordship the Cardinal. I am quite content with whatever pleases them. How glad I should be to see you before sending my daughter I cannot express, but I am sure the Magnificent Piero knows best, and that we shall never err by carrying out his commands. At all events I hope you have the wish to know me and all your relations here. No more. God preserve you ever in good health and happiness. Clarice is well and commends herself to all.—Rome, March 4, 1469.

MAGHDALENA DE URSINUS.<sup>2</sup>

### FILIPPO DE' MEDICI, *Archbishop of Pisa*, to LORENZO DE' MEDICI

*Magnifice vir et frater honorande, &c.,*—I hardly know how to express to Your Magnificence with what pleasure and contentment I have this day espoused in your name the Magnificent and noble Madonna Clarice degl' Orsini, a maiden whose looks, carriage, and manners I conceive merit the bridegroom who was I think destined for her by Heaven. For this Your Magnificence ought devoutly to thank God who in this, as in other matters wherein you have been so well treated by fortune, has protected you; and I, who desire your well-being and

<sup>1</sup> *Tre Lettere di Lucrezia, &c., op. cit.* Rinaldo Orsini was afterwards Archbishop of Florence.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

honour as ardently as any one, for many reasons have longed for this day and congratulate Your Magnificence *ex intimo cordis*; may it be productive of all good. I pray our Lord Jesus Christ to grant to both a happy and a long life together and to let you see *filios filiorum vestrorum usque in quartam et quintam generationem*. I will say no more because from Giovanni [Tornabuoni] you will have heard everything. If I can do aught for your service let me know, and I will do it as willingly as any one alive, as I am sure Your Magnificence knows *quam Deas diu felicem conservet*.<sup>1</sup>

Lorenzo in his *Ricordi* writes: "I, Lorenzo, took to wife Clarice, the daughter of Signor Jacopo Orsini, or rather she was given to me (*i.e.* betrothed), in December 1468 and the marriage was celebrated in our house on the 4th June 1469. Till now I have by her two children, a daughter called Lucrezia . . . years old, and a son called Piero . . . months old. King Ferrante is the godfather of the girl. She is again with child. God spare her to us for a long time and preserve her from all ill" (see p. 153).

The following description of Lorenzo de' Medici's wedding is taken from a contemporary manuscript existing in Codex 574, Class xxv. of the Strozzi MSS. in the National Library of Florence. There is no record of the writer in the manuscript, but his name appears in the catalogue of the Library as Piero di Marco Parenti, and it may be that it was on the cover which is wanting. Born in Florence in January 18, 1450, Parenti died in May 1519, and according to Moreni was the author of several other works which still exist in manuscript in the Library. The name of the person to whom the letter was written does not appear, but from people mentioned, and other indications, he may have been Filippo di Matteo Strozzi, the builder of the fine Palazzo Strozzi in Florence, who was then in Naples.

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, &c., vol. ii. p. 39.

## PIERO DI COSIMO DE' MEDICI

*An Account of the Wedding of LORENZO DI PIERO DI COSIMO, according to what was told me by Cosimo Bartoli, one of the principal Directors of the Festival, particularly as regards Sweetmeats and Sugar-plums, and also what I saw myself*

On Friday, which was the 2nd of June, the presents offered by the countryside began to arrive from the principal towns, Pisa, Arezzo, and other communes, villas, and castles. All presented eatables, such as calves, fowls, geese, wine, sweetmeats, wax, and fish. I send you the exact list as far as I could get it. The presentations of these went on all day on Saturday with great noise and rejoicings: and on that day pieces of veal of from 10 to 20 lbs. in weight were given to 800 citizens. You and I were among the number.

Calves, 150.

More than 2000 couples of capons, geese, and fowls.

Sea fish and trout in large quantities. I do not yet know how many.

Sweet things in abundance; sugar-plums as big as arbutus berries, almonds, pine-seeds, sweetmeats, also the imitations thereof from there [Naples?]. The number I do not yet know.

Wax I know not how much.

Many hundreds of flasks of wine and several casks of foreign wines, such as malvasy and the like, and of native red wine.

Of corn, oats, and the like, I do not think there was much.

On Sunday morning the bride left the house of Benedetto degl' Alessandri on the big horse given to Lorenzo by the King [of Naples], preceded by many trumpeters and fifers, and surrounded by the youths usually in attendance on marriage festivities, well clothed. Behind her came two cavaliers, Messer Carlo and Messer Tommaso, on horseback with their retainers, who according to the usage of the city accompanied her to her husband's house which was most sumptuously adorned, and where a stage had been erected in the street for

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dancing. As she dismounted the bride's retinue arrived from the house of the Alessandri : thirty young matrons and maidens most richly dressed, and among them was your Fiammetta, one of the two handsomest there. They were accompanied by another set of youths dressed for dancing and preceded by trumpeters. Thirty other maidens were in Lorenzo's house to receive the bride and her retinue. After the olive tree, to the sound of much music, had been hauled up to the windows, all went to dinner. The tree was arranged in a vase like those used on the triumphal cars for the feast of S. Giovanni and was almost like a *trionfo*.

The order of the banquets, of which there were five, was alike on the mornings of Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday.

The bride, with about fifty maidens who were the dancers, ate in the garden under the loggia which you know, and the tables were set at the sides as far as the doors, one of which leads into the house, the other outside. In the loggia which surrounds the courtyard of the house sat the citizens who had been invited. The tables were placed on three sides, beginning from the garden, and following the wall were six tables : here sat from seventy to eighty citizens. In the ground-floor hall the youths who danced, about thirty-two or thirty-six, were seated. Forty or more men of more mature age were occupied in marshalling the banquet, and at every table were two who acted as seneschals. On a balcony in the great room upstairs dined the women of a certain age, among them was your mother-in-law Monna Antonia, and like her were about forty others in the company of Monna Lucrezia. In short, at the principal tables dined about two hundred people.

The order observed in serving was marvellous. For all the dishes were brought in at the door opening into the street, preceded, as is the custom, by trumpets. The bearers turned to the right in the loggia and returned to the foot of the staircase up which some went, while others passed into the hall to



## PIERO DI COSIMO DE' MEDICI

the youths, and others to the maidens in the garden, and others again remained under the loggie where were those who had been invited, so that all were served at the same time. The like order was observed in taking away the dishes, and each man knew his service and his place and did nought else. The dishes were according to the tables, and among those who brought them in were the stewards, each of whom directed his own men to the proper table. There were fifty large dishes, the contents of each of which were sufficient to fill two trenchers, and one trencher was placed between every two guests, a carver being in attendance.

The banquets were prepared for a marriage rather than for a magnificent feast, and I think this was done *de industria* as an example to others not to exceed the modesty and simplicity suitable to marriages, so there was never more than one roast. In the morning a small dish, then some boiled meat, then a roast, after that wafers, marzipan and sugared almonds and pine-seeds, then jars of preserved pine-seeds and sweetmeats. In the evening jelly, a roast, fritters, wafers, almonds, and jars of sweetmeats. On Tuesday morning, instead of the roast were sweet pies of succulent vegetables on trenchers; the wines were excellent malvasy, trebbiano,<sup>1</sup> and red wine. Of silver plate there was little.

No sideboards had been placed for the silver. Only tall tables in the middle of the courtyard, round that handsome column on which stands the David,<sup>2</sup> covered with tablecloths, and at the four corners were four great copper basins for the glasses, and behind the tables stood men to hand wine or water to those who served the guests. The same arrangement was made in the garden round the fountain you know. On the tables were silver vessels in which the glasses were put to be kept cool. The salt-cellars, forks, knife-handles, bowls for the

<sup>1</sup> A Tuscan white wine still much prized.

<sup>2</sup> Donatello's David. It was placed in the courtyard of the Palazzo Vecchio after the expulsion of Piero de' Medici in 1494 and is now in the Bargello.



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fritters, almonds, sugar-plums, and the jars for preserved pine-seeds were of silver; there was none other for the guests save the basins and jugs for washing of hands. The table-cloths were of the finest white damask linen<sup>1</sup> laid according to our fashion.

About four hundred citizens were invited to these five banquets, and among them the first of your house was your Lorenzo, and then Agnolo and Lodovico; I was also there.

On Monday morning to all who had received veal, jelly was given, and then about 1500 trenchers full were presented to others. Many religious [monks and nuns] also received gifts of fowls, fish, sweetmeats, wine, and similar things.

After the guests at the first tables had finished many hundreds ate. They say that between the house here and that of Messer Carlo<sup>2</sup> more than a thousand people ate, and at Messer Carlo's every day one hundred barrels of wine were drunk.

In the house here, where the marriage feast was, every respectable person who came in was at once taken to the ground-floor hall, out of the large loggia, to refresh himself with fruit, sweetmeats, and white and red wine. The common folk were not invited.

The feasting began in the morning a little before dinner-time, then every one went away to repose. At about the twentieth hour (4 o'clock) they returned and danced until supper-time on the stage outside, which was decorated with tapestries, benches, and forms, and covered in with large curtains of purple, green, and white cloth, embroidered with the arms of the Medici and the Orsini. Every time a company came on to the stage to dance they took refreshments once or twice, according to the time. First came the trumpeters, then a great silver basin, then many smaller ones full of glasses, then

<sup>1</sup> *Tela di Renza*, or *Rensa*, so-called because it came from Rheims in France.

<sup>2</sup> The illegitimate son of Cosimo, canon of the cathedral of Florence.

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small silver jars full of water, then many flasks of trebbiano and then twenty-three silver bowls full of preserved pine-seeds and sweet conserves. To all was given in abundance and all the dishes were emptied; and the same with the flasks of wine. The account has not been made, but from five to . . . thousand pounds of sweetmeats and sugar-plums were consumed.

The bride has received about fifty rings, costing they say from ten to fifty or sixty ducats each; one piece of brocade; a sweetmeat dish of silver, and many other such things; and a small book of the offices of Our Lady, most beautiful, the gift of Messer Gentile,<sup>1</sup> written in letters of gold on blue vellum and covered with crystal and worked silver, which cost about two hundred florins. On Tuesday the bride left (a tournament was held first), and returned to the house of the Alessandri in the same dress in which she came to be married. This was a robe of white and gold brocade and a magnificent hood on her head, as is used here. She rode the same horse and was accompanied by the same youths, whose rich dresses of silver brocade embroidered with large pearls and jewels baffle description. From what they tell of courts of great princes nothing was ever seen like it save certain jewels of great value worn by some great Lords. Of the women I say nothing! Such jackets and robes of silk, all of them embroidered with pearls. I rather blame than praise this height of civilisation. And thus ended this marriage.

One day it rained; on the Monday, just when the feast was at its highest. It seemed as though done on purpose. It enveloped everything and wet the beautiful dresses, for the rain was so sudden and so heavy that many could not get under shelter soon enough. But the youths and the women had not put on the finest clothes which they had reserved for that day, the most important of the feast, so that to many it seemed their money had been spent in vain, not being able to wear

<sup>1</sup> Gentile Becchi of Urbino, tutor to Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici, afterwards Bishop of Arezzo.

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them. However, on Tuesday morning when the bride went to hear mass in S. Lorenzo, accompanied by all the youths and maidens who had attended her at the wedding, every one was in their finest clothes. I warrant you that there were about fifty maidens and young girls and as many or more youths, so richly dressed that I do not think that anywhere among so many people could such a splendid and fine spectacle be seen.

I know that though I have written you many things and in much detail there is much still to be said; and although it is not worth your reading or my writing, yet I have done so for your information, as I know you to be curious, and that you like to know exactly how things went. So I have written thus thinking it would please you better than a more serious style.<sup>1</sup>

RINALDO ORSINI to his sister CLARICE DE' MEDICI

Magnificent sister, *salutem*. From Messer Giovanni [Tornabuoni] we have heard all the excellent news about your family, so that we are most happy and contented, and could have received no better news. We all beg and advise you to conduct yourself in such manner with every one that you will become even dearer to Piero, Lorenzo, Giuliano, Madonna Contessina, and Madonna Lucrezia, and to your sisters-in-law, and generally to all relations and other persons you meet. If we can do anything here for Lorenzo or any of your family offer me to them, for nothing shall be left undone to fulfil any desire of theirs. Also if there is aught you wish done tell me, and I shall show that I hold you as dear as I do Organtino, who, as a male, and careful of the interests of our house, I love as I do my own life. Commend me to the Magnificent Piero and the ladies, and salute Lorenzo and Giuliano from me. *Item* it is necessary that Messer Baptista da Augubio [Gubbio]

<sup>1</sup> *Delle Nozze di Lorenzo de' Medici con Clarice Orsini nel 1469. Informazione di Piero Parenti Fiorentino, per le Nozze di Florestano ed Elisa dei Conti di Larderel. In Firenze, 1870.*

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should go to Florence, you know how devoted he is to us ; if needs be ask Piero and Lorenzo, for love of us, to favour him.

—Rome, June 1469.

RAINALDUS DE ORSINI.<sup>1</sup>

### GIOVANNI DI BENTIVOGLI *from Bologna to PIERO DE' MEDICI at Florence*

*Magnifice et Prestantissime Pater honorande*,—I have not written to Your Magnificence in these last days about the affair at Rimini, because I was sure you would hear of it from diverse sides, and that the Illustrious League would take proper steps. But as I neither see nor hear that the Illustrious League has made any sign of life and considering the great injury to us, to the friends of the League, and to yourself, which will be occasioned in the future, I am moved to note it and to impart my thoughts to Your Magnificence ; although I do not esteem myself of sufficient capacity to write such notes. But anxiety, and devotion to the Illustrious League, and the love I bear Your Magnificence induce me to warn you. I have also written this my opinion to H.E. the Duke, and should have done the same to H.M. the King, only the road is long and our messengers pass with difficulty, also I thought Your Magnificence would have sent the news from there. Your Magnificence must have heard that the Signoria of Venice has again made an alliance with our Lord the Pope, *et inter alia* has promised to send, whenever he demands them, 4000 horse and 3000 foot soldiers into Romagna. From good authority I hear that the Pope has just asked for them, and that the Signoria is arming them and has ordered His Magnificence Ercole [Duke of Ferrara], the Lords of Carpi and of Mirandola, to hold themselves in readiness to march ; and that yesterday they were to receive their pay. Also I hear that bridges are being thrown across the Po near Ravenna, for the

<sup>1</sup> *Donne Medicee avanti il Principato*, Berta Felice, Rassegna Nazionale.

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passage of the troops of the Signoria of Venice, and that the picked squadrons and Antonello da la Corna were advancing to meet these others. What all these preparations mean I leave to the judgment of Your Magnificence. I can only imagine that the Pope and the Signoria of Venice intend to occupy Arimino and the rest of Romagna and then Bologna. Should Rimini fall this will probably happen, and where Bologna and Imola would be Your Magnificence and the League may, like prudent men, calculate. He who does not put a stop to such beginnings will spend a hundred instead of one, and God grant things may go well. I therefore beg and entreat Your Magnificence to succour little Arimino in order that the wound may not fester and increase in such wise that none can heal it. The Illustrious League must not allow its friends to lose courage and faith, else the end will be our perdition. To me it seems this is not a moment for losing time. Your Magnificence must remember that the Pope and the Signoria of Venice have been preparing this for a long time, otherwise the Pope would not have spent so much money, a thing quite against his nature. Had the move been only against Arimino; but it is more especially against Bologna and the rest of Romagna, and more considerable events may follow. I commend myself to Your Magnificence.—June 17, 1469.

JOHANNES DI BENTIVOLIS.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A. Fabronio, *Laurentii Medicis Magnifici Vita*, Annotationes et Monumenta, p. 45. Pisis, 1784.

In *Memoirs of Dukes of Urbino*, by J. Dennistoun, vol. i. p. 186, is the following passage: "Federigo's [of Urbino] condotta in the papal service had just expired, leaving him free to consult the dictates of policy, his views as to which were stated in an appeal to Pietro de' Medici on behalf of Rimini, in words which may almost be deemed prophetic. "I am constrained to believe that the Pontiff and the Venetian Signory intend to occupy Rimini and all Romagna, and eventually Bologna too. Rimini once lost, the rest will readily follow, and your lordship and the league may easily suppose where Bologna and Imola would then be. Those who will not resist such projects at first may have afterwards to pay a hundredfold, and God grant that it be to good purpose.'" Edited by Edward Hutton. John Lane, London, 1909.

It is a curious coincidence that Bentivoglio and Federigo of Urbino should use almost identical words, unless Dennistoun has made a mistake about the writer.



## PIERO DI COSIMO DE' MEDICI

A few weeks after his wedding Lorenzo had to leave his bride and undertake an embassy to Milan. A son had been born on June 20th to Galeazzo, Duke of Milan, and Piero de' Medici was asked to stand sponsor to the child. He was too ill to travel, and "somewhat unwillingly," he confesses, sent Lorenzo to act as his proxy. The embassy went by Prato, Pistoja, Lucca, and Pietrasanta to Sarzana, which town and district had been recently purchased by Pietro and added to the Florentine dominions. Thence the company travelled by Pontremoli to Milan. The preparations for the journey were evidently on too magnificent a scale to please the cautious father, and we find him complaining to his wife Lucrezia in a less affectionate tone than usual. The following three letters refer to the journey. To it also belongs the passage in Lorenzo's *Ricordi* or memoranda, in which he states that Sforza proposed that he should stand godfather to all his other children.

### PIERO DE' MEDICI at Careggi to LUCREZIA his wife in Florence

Thou knowest how unwilling I was for many reasons, particularly in order not to give any importance to this mission, to allow Lorenzo to go. Yesterday we agreed about this, but I have not heard what thou hast done; it has been much talked about, which displeases me. Herewith I repeat that they must be here this evening and start *infallanter* to-morrow morning. If they do not, I shall arrange in some other way. Meanwhile see that everything is ready, and tell Lorenzo that he is not to exceed his orders, or to make any great show;<sup>1</sup> he is not an ambassador. I am determined that the gosling shall not lead the gander to drink. Make haste, for thou must return here without fail this evening. No more.—Careggi, July 13, 1469.

PIERO DI COSIMO.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Non fare tante melarancie* (Not make so many oranges): an old proverb.

<sup>2</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Avi, No. i. 474.



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GENTILE BECCHI to CLARICE DE' MEDICI

*Magnifica Domina, &c.*

Your Magnificence commanded me to send you news of your Magnificent Lorenzo every eight days. I now begin to recount the first week. As you will have heard from Francesco Nori and Guglielmo de' Pazzi, after leaving you in the early morning we arrived at Prato during the cool. He dined with the Proto-notary of the Medici, together with the Podestà of the place, his own people and Giuliano. There was some wind when we left about the 20th hour [4 P.M.], and he reached Pistoja on Friday evening, being met by several citizens of the town. He dismounted at the Bishop's palace, as a messenger had said that Monsignore expected him. Having saluted the Bishop he went, while the luggage was being unloaded, to visit the two governors (*Rettori*), the Captain and the Podestà of the town, who were all invited by the Bishop to keep him company at supper. Four citizens came on behalf of the Priors to excuse themselves in the name of the townspeople, that on account of his unexpected arrival they had not, &c. &c., and begged him with affectionate words that on his return, &c. On Saturday he mounted at nine in the morning, and dined at Pescia with the governor, Baptista Nasi, there being no better inn; the heads of the Commune came to pay their respects, and presented wine, marzipan (cakes made with sweet almonds), and corn, and some private citizens did the same. After resting in the house of the Grand Master of Altopascio, who had accompanied him for dinner, he left at 20 of the clock, and met several chief citizens who had come to do him honour in their houses. Passing through Lucca at 23 of the clock, he dismounted at the inn della Corona,<sup>1</sup> outside the town on the Pisan road, intending to leave the next morning (Sunday). But after supper came six citizens of Lucca, with

<sup>1</sup> The inn still exists.

## PIERO DÍ COSIMO DE' MEDICI

torches and servants of the Signoria, and finding Lorenzo on the square in the cool receiving visits from private acquaintances Paolo Trenta and Piero Guidiccioni addressed him, complaining that he had not deigned to dismount in a city where he was so welcome and had such influence, but had gone outside, and then in a long oration they prayed him to wait until the Signoria had, &c. &c. Lorenzo replied that to see them, whom he revered as fathers, gave him patience to undertake these visits, and perceiving that he was expected to reply in person he would put off his departure until after dinner, and next morning would come and demonstrate his affection towards the Signoria. Messer Niccolò da Noceto, Paolo di Poggio, and many other citizens came on Sunday morning to fetch him, and placing him first in their midst, and then Bernardo Rucellai, and then the Chancellor, they accompanied him to mass in the chapel of the Volto Santo, and then to the Signoria, where he spoke so fluently and so well that he drew to himself the hearts of all the people. When he returned presents began to arrive, torches, large and small, marzipan, boxes of sweetmeats, and wine. He thanked, bestowed gifts, kept a few of the gentlemen to dinner, spread out his silver, and as some showed symptoms of moving the wind having risen, he left before the time fixed; yet many of the citizens rode after him, and insisted on accompanying him and talking much. On the way he rested at Chiesa, Mazzarosa, and Capezano, all very pretty places. At Pietrasanta he arrived at 23 of the clock, and lodged at the inn of the Campana outside, for it is an untrustworthy town; S. George had not much faith in S. Zita.<sup>1</sup> But the governor, who is a gentleman from Fiesco, sent to offer to pay his respects, and to do anything in his power. He saw him, thanked, and then, accompanied by all those men who could not take their eyes off him, supped with some of the citizens under an arbour; the place is beautiful

<sup>1</sup> S. George is the patron saint of Pietrasanta, S. Zita a favourite saint in Lucca.

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with the sea in front and fertile plains behind. At 8 of the clock he mounted and rode sixteen miles most gaily. Under Monte Tignoso he met an envoy of the Magnificent Marquess of Fosdinovo, who invited him in the name of his master, and at Lavenza, or a little before reaching Luni, the Marquess Gabriello himself, who conducted him to his house at Sarzana. On dismounting he visited the governor who rules here for the Florentines, then we dined, and after resting a little went to see Sarzanella, which seen from the castle seemed to him a good purchase.<sup>1</sup> When he had supped he went to visit Messer Francesco, ducal Cameriere, who lives out of the town, and finding him ill provided for supper, he supplied him bountifully. To-morrow he goes to dine at Villa Franca, and in the evening will be at Pontremoli. The journey has been so arranged that he will be at Milan on Saturday, and after fulfilling his Magnificent father's commission he will return at once to you who are the only one he regrets being absent from. He is very well and gay, and so is Bernardo.<sup>2</sup> Tell Nannina this. Our party is as when we left all good friends and obedient; we have had no drawbacks, for not even a nail is wanting. We have had no delays or frauds. All goes well and happily: please God we shall find you the same, to whom we all commend ourselves.—The 18th day of July 1469.<sup>3</sup>

### LORENZO DE' MEDICI to his wife CLARICE

I have arrived here safely and am well. I am sure this will please thee more than any other news save that of my return, judging by my own feelings of longing for thee and for home.

<sup>1</sup> Sarzana and Sarzanella had been bought the year before by Piero de' Medici from Lodovico di Campo Fregoso. They were valuable to Florence as Sarzana commanded the direct road from Milan to Florence which near there lay between the mountains and the sea. An invasion from the north was thus rendered difficult, while an attack on Lucca could be carried out without fear of her allies being able to come swiftly to her help. Sarzanella, the fine fortress built by the great Lucchese Ghibelline, Castruccio Castrocane, in its turn commanded Sarzana.

<sup>2</sup> Bernardo Rucellai, husband of Lorenzo's sister Nannina.

<sup>3</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, op. cit. ii. 54.

## PIERO DI COSIMO DE' MEDICI

Make much of Piero, Mona Contessina, and Mona Lucrezia ; I shall hasten to finish here and return to thee, for it seems to me a thousand years since I saw thee. Pray to God for me, and if thou wantest aught from here let me know, so be I have not already left Milan.—July 22, 1469.

THY LORENZO DE' MEDICI.<sup>1</sup>

In Lorenzo's *Ricordi* he writes : "In the month of July MCDLXIX I went to Milan at the request of the most illustrious Duke Galeazzo to stand godfather, as proxy for Piero our father, to his first-born child. I was received with much honour, more so than the others who came for the same purpose, although they were persons more worthy than I. We paid our duty to the Duchess by presenting her with a necklace of gold with a large diamond, which cost near 2000 ducats. The consequence was that the said Lord desired that I should stand godfather to all his children."<sup>2</sup>

LORENZO DE' MEDICI, *from Monza, to his father*  
*PIERO in Florence*

Being here at Monza with His Excellency, he wishes me to write to you about sending aid to Arimino, and begs you to arrange that Signor Roberto [Malatesta] with his troop should join the Duke of Urbino. As I know that Messer Luigi is writing fully about this I say no more, and all being in his hands I should not have mentioned it but for His Lordship's orders. You will see what I write to Sagromora about being careful of your own person, so that nothing unforeseen should happen. It is well to give ear to all, though I do not think the danger is as great as it seems. Still it is better to be prudent, and to imagine danger may be greater than it really is.

I have taken leave of His Excellency, and this evening go to Milan, where I shall spend all to-morrow. On Monday, if it

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., ii. 56.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 153, Lorenzo's *Ricordi*.

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pleases God, I leave by way of Genoa, as after talking to His Lordship he thought it a good plan. I expect to stay two or three days in Genoa and to be with you on the 13th or at the latest the 14th of August. Meanwhile I commend myself to you,—Moncia [Monza], July 28, 1469.

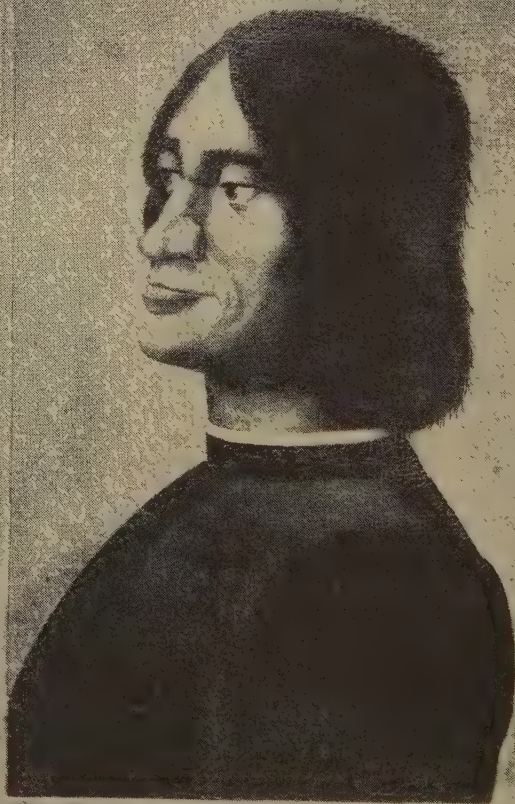
YOUR LORENZO.<sup>1</sup>

In the autumn of 1469 Piero de' Medici was very ill, partly no doubt from anxiety about the state of Florence, "grievously troubled by her own citizens." He summoned the chief burghers to his bedside, reproached them in the bitter words cited by Machiavelli, and threatened that he would cause them to repent. Fair words in plenty they gave him, but never changed their evil courses. "Whereupon," continues Machiavelli, "Piero called Agnolo Acciaiuoli secretly to Caffagiuolo and conferred at length with him about the condition of the city. There is no doubt that had he not been prevented by death he would have reinstated all those who had been banished in order to put a stop to the robbery of the others. But death put an end to these most praiseworthy intentions. Tormented by increasing infirmity and anguish of mind, he died in the fifty-third year of his age. His country could not fully recognise his worth and his goodness, because until nearly the end of his life he was associated with his father Cosimo, and the few years during which he survived him were passed in civil contests and constant illness." Piero died at Careggi on December 2, 1469, and was buried in S. Lorenzo, near his father.

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza vii. No. 411.







LAVRENTIVS MEDICES

LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI.  
*In the Museo Giovo (Villa Soave, Como).*

## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

(1450-1492)

LORENZO DE' MEDICI, whose wonderful personality still has the power to excite bitter hatred and an almost passionate admiration, was a marvellously many-sided man. Marsilio Ficino said he possessed the three endowments called "graces" by Orpheus, splendour, light-heartedness, and rejuvenescence—splendour of intellect, light-heartedness in resolution, and a continual renewal of youth in person and in fortune. He was not twenty-one when his father died, worn out by bodily suffering, but Lorenzo had been his right hand for years, had been sent to represent him at foreign courts, and had seen more of the world than most men of double his age. He and his younger brother Giuliano received the education of princes rather than of the sons of a merchant. Gentile Becchi of Urbino, a man of unblemished life and considerable learning, was their tutor, Landino taught them Italian literature, Argyropulos Greek, and Marsilio Ficino Platonic philosophy. They had also evidently been taught good manners, as Cambi, who never misses an opportunity to decry the Medici, tells us that when Lorenzo was with a citizen older than himself he always gave him the place of honour on his right. Above all, the two lads had the example and the teaching of their mother Lucrezia, a woman of strong good sense and genuine piety, who possessed a sunny nature, that rare gift humour, and a marked poetical temperament. From early childhood she sent Lorenzo to the meetings of the confraternity of S. Paolo, where men met for vigil and prayer, and after the services Messer Gentile by her orders made him distribute alms to the poor. When the boy was thirteen Gentile wrote to his father: "Lorenzo is well, your absence is ever before him. We are well advanced in Ovid and also in Justinian, four books of history and fables. You need not

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ask how he delights in these studies. His conduct is excellent, and he is very obedient."

After Piero's death Lucrezia, who had always been her husband's trusted helpmate, became the counsellor to whom Lorenzo turned for help, consolation, and advice. He also had the good fortune to have a wise and capable man by his side, Tommaso Soderini, husband of his mother's sister, Dianora Tornabuoni. Soderini's influence was considerable, and he used it to induce his fellow-citizens to confirm Lorenzo in the pre-eminent though entirely unofficial position held by his grandfather and his father. There was hardly a dissentient voice when the chief citizens of Florence came to the Medici palace and begged him to take charge of the city as they had done.

Niccolò Valori describes Lorenzo as "above the common stature, with broad shoulders, solidly built, robust, and second to none in agility. Although nature had acted towards him like a stepmother with regard to his personal appearance, in all things connected with the mind she had been a loving mother. His complexion was swarthy, and although his face was not handsome, it was so full of dignity as to command respect. He was short-sighted, his nose was flattened, and he had no sense of smell. This did not trouble him. He was wont to say that he was grateful to nature, disagreeable things being more common than agreeable ones to so delicate a sense."

Lorenzo was much inferior to his grandfather Cosimo in commercial talent, but he was a genius, and as Symonds writes, "possessed of one of those rare natures, fitted to comprehend all knowledge and to sympathise with the most diverse forms of life. While he never for a moment relaxed his hold on politics, among philosophers he passed as a sage, among men of letters for an original and graceful poet, among scholars for a Grecian, sensitive to every nicety of Attic idiom, among artists for an amateur gifted with refined discernment and consummate taste. Pleasure-seekers knew in him the libertine, who jousted with the boldest, danced and masqueraded with the merriest, sought adventures in the streets at night, and joined the people in their May-day games and Carnival festivities. The pious extolled him as an author of devotional lauds and mystery plays, a profound theologian, a critic of sermons. He was no

## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

less famous for his jokes and repartees than for his pithy apothegms and maxims, as good a judge of cattle as of statues, as much at home in the bosom of his family as in the riot of an orgy, as ready to discourse on Plato as to plan a campaign or to plot the death of a dangerous citizen."<sup>1</sup>

A philosopher, a diplomatist, a "Pagan much inclined to the worship of Venus," as Machiavelli tells us, a Christian as shown in his *Laudi* and his *Capitoli*, evidently written *con amore*, a staunch friend, generous and kind, yet he is generally accused of having ordered the sack of Volterra—now, however, proved to have been instigated by the mercenaries engaged to defend the town—and of causing his opponents to be tortured and executed. The indelible stain on Lorenzo's fair name is his interference with the deposits in the *Monte*.<sup>2</sup> Cambi, who it must be remembered was no friend of the Medici, writes: "On the 13th August 1490 seventeen so-called Reformers were created by the authority of the Signory, the Colleges of the Council, of the People, and of the Commune, the Council of the One Hundred, the officers of the *Monte*, and the whole *Popolo* of Florence. Under pretext of revising the coinage and the duties they altered the entries of all monies received for the use of the State for the benefit of Lorenzo de' Medici, who needed money in order to make his son Messer Giovanni a cardinal, which he did. And it was done with the money of the Commune. Counting what they gave him after he became a cardinal, it cost the Commune 10,000 scudi in gold. From the poor dowers of the married maidens and of those about to be married they deducted by means of taxes and the reduction of all future interest  $\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. of the interest, so that what should have given 3 per cent. they lowered to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., and even that was not paid. . . . Thus few maidens married, and those few only by dint of money. Even then the permission of Lorenzo de' Medici was necessary. Let every one therefore

<sup>1</sup> *Renaissance in Italy*, J. A. Symonds, ii. 232. Smith, Elder & Co., London, 1897.

<sup>2</sup> To obtain funds for the exchequer exhausted by the war against Milan in 1426 recourse was had to a curious financial scheme. A *Monte*, or special fund, was created for granting marriage portions to young men and maidens. Every contributor had the right to name a male or female child, to whom at the expiration of fifteen years a sum five times that subscribed was paid when they married. Should the nominee die the money became the property of the *Monte*. As far as I understand these *Monti* gradually developed into State pawnbrokers' establishments.



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consider what it means to create tyrants in the city, to make a Balìa and to call a parliament.”<sup>1</sup>

It was fortunate for the Italian language that the young Lorenzo fell under the influence of Leon Battista Alberti, who asserted that “though the ancient tongue has undisputed authority because so many learned men have employed it, the like honour will certainly be paid to our language to-day if men of culture take the pains to purify and polish it.” The revival of classical learning had almost arrested the study of Italian. In spite of the example of Dante and Boccaccio, Latin was the patrician and literary language, and even when men of letters used the vulgar tongue they interlarded it with Latin. Poliziano’s letters are a case in point. The example of Lorenzo altered all this. In his letter to Federigo of Naples (p. 88) he passes extraordinarily acute criticism on the old Italian poets, and in his Commentary, which takes up ninety-three double pages in the Aldine edition of his poems, he predicts a glorious future to the language used by Dante, Cavalcanti, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. “Men and practice,” he says, “have rather been wanting to the language than the language to the men.” Muratori, treating of the poetry of the fifteenth century, gives the palm to Lorenzo, and Carducci declares him to be little if at all inferior to Poliziano and Pulci.

Incessantly occupied in preserving the balance of power in Italy, yet in his short life of forty-two years he wrote an amount of poetry, and good poetry, which would do credit to a man whose whole life is dedicated to literature. Treated as an equal by popes and princes—the King of France doffed his cap to his ambassadors and called him “my beloved cousin”—he was at home with the artisan and the peasant, whose tastes he to a certain degree shared, and whose characters he so perfectly understood and describes. In *La Nencia da Barberino*, that gayest of gay poems overflowing with *la joie de vivre*, often imitated but never surpassed, Vallera, the shy love-sick peasant, sings the praises of his Nencia, who, with her pretty ways and soft words, her eyes as black as coal, and her fair curly hair, would bear away the palm among a thousand city maidens. Such a dancer too. She bounds like a young goat, whirls like the wheel of a mill and then curtsies, no Florentine lady can

<sup>1</sup> *Istorie di Giovanni Cambi*, Delizie degli Eruditi Toscani, xxi. 64. Firenze, 1785.

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do it better. He offers to buy her a paper cornet full of rouge or powder, or pins, or a necklace of those little red buttons [coral] when he goes to Florence, for he would draw the marrow from his bones to give her pleasure. Could he put his heart into her hands it would cry "*Nencia, Nencia bella*," if she cut it with a knife. But Nencia flirts with other swains, his sighs are full of tears, he waits for her to come with her sheep when he drives his heifers to pasture, and the cruel girl turns back.<sup>1</sup>

Lorenzo's love of the country, of country life, and of animals, is shown in *Ambra* and *La Caccia col Falcone*. The former is an allegorical description of a flood which swept away an island at Lorenzo's favourite villa, Poggio a Caiano. Winter is approaching. Only the bay, the myrtle, and the prickly juniper, shine among the bare trees, while the few birds take refuge in the cypresses. The olives on a southern slope sway, now green now silver white, to the breeze. The cranes print varied and beautiful lines on the sky, and Lorenzo notes how the leader cedes his place, when tired, to one of those in the rear. The eagle slowly circles in the air, a menace to all smaller fowl. Zephyr has fled to Cyprus, where he dances with the lazy flowers among the green grass. Boreas drives the mists down from the Alps, and the river, writhing like a serpent in the valley, gathers his tributaries. With strange sounds he rises. The yellow foam is tossed into the air as the wicked turbid stream rolls stone upon stone, and dashing against the dykes, overwhelms Ambra, "beloved of Lorenzo." The terrified peasants take refuge on the roofs of their cottages, and watch their poor riches being swept away. Then comes the more artificial and well-worn tale of the lovely nymph Ambra pursued by the river god Ombrone, her prayer to the chaste goddess, and her farewell to Lorenzo as she is turned to stone.

*La Caccia col Falcone* is a graphic account of the sport

<sup>1</sup> I have followed the Ashburnham Codex, now in the Laurentian Library, published by Sigr. Guglielmo Volpi in the *Atti della R. Accademia della Crusca*, 1907-1908. There the poem has only twenty octaves instead of fifty, and I think most people will agree that this is the real version and that the other mentioning *quella trista Becca*, evidently alluding to Luigi Pulci's poem *La Becca di Dicomano*, written later in imitation of Lorenzo's poem *Nencia*, has interpolations by an inferior hand. Sigr. Volpi has published the poem in a small pamphlet, *Un Nuovo Testo della Nencia*, da G. Volpi. Tipografia Gallileiana, Firenze, 1908.



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Lorenzo loved. Falcons, dogs, and men are drawn with facile pen by a man who delighted in country life and open air.

*Selve d'Amore* is a lover's complaint on the absence of his lady. Jealousy, Hope, and the Age of Gold, which existed before the opening of Pandora's box, are described. He invokes his mistress in these beautiful lines beginning :

“O vaghi occhi amorosi,”

and at last she appears, Beauty on her right hand, Love on her left.

This is, however, not the place to describe Lorenzo's poems, the fine *Altercazione*, a Platonic dialogue; the *Capitoli*, or *I Beoni*. His *Ballate*, *Canzone di Ballo*, and *Canzone Carnescaleschi*, which represent the popular, often very licentious poetry of the streets, are known to all Italian scholars. Il Lasca (A. Grazzini), after describing the masqueraders parading the streets with *Trionfi*, allegorical or mythological cars, and *Carri* filled with men representing various trades, each one preceded and followed by its special attendants singing and dancing, and many masqued horsemen, says: “The Magnificent Lorenzo invented this manner of celebrating the festival. Formerly men dressed up as women went about the streets singing and dancing, imitating the maidens who thus greeted the month of May. The Magnificent, finding it was always the same thing, imagined to change not only the songs but the whole representation and the words, writing songs with varied metres, and causing new and different airs to be written. The first of these masquerades was performed by men who sold sugar-plums and *berriquocoli* (small cakes), and the music, for three voices, was written by a certain Arrigo Tedesco,<sup>1</sup> head of the choir of S. Giovanni, a musician of great repute in those days.”

The most beautiful of Lorenzo's carnival songs is *Il Trionfo di Bacco e Arianne*, beginning :

“Quant'è bella giovanezza  
Che si fugge tuttavia.”

Lorenzo's sonnets are many, and some are worthy to rank with those of the most famous poets; indeed Muratori, in the speci-

<sup>1</sup> Heinrich Isaak, a Bohemian composer.

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mens of perfect poetry appended to his treatise, cites four of them, together with the finest of Dante, Cavalcanti, Petrarch, and other great poets. In the *Laudi*, and the sacred play *S. Giovanni e Paolo*, can be traced Lorenzo's early bringing up under his mother, herself no mean poetess, and the good Bishop Gentile. The play was written in later life for his children who acted it. It is said that Lorenzo himself took the part of Constantine. Already ill, and oppressed with cares, the Emperor's address to his sons describing the duties of a ruler, and the lines

" Spesso chi chiama Costantin felice  
Sta meglio assai di me e'l ver non dice,"

have a sad autobiographical ring.

Lorenzo, the one great statesman of Italy, had no easy part to play. As prudent as he was dexterous, the preservation of peace in Italy was his constant aim, to be attained by a maintenance of the balance of power so that no one State should become pre-eminent. His violent and unscrupulous enemy Sixtus IV. used every arm against him. When assassination failed he tried excommunication, and the laying of Florence under an interdict. The Florentines answered by appointing twelve citizens as a bodyguard to Lorenzo, and bidding the clergy to celebrate the sacraments. His sagacity, not only as a Tuscan but an Italian, was shown by the able way in which he traversed French schemes for interfering in Italy, although the fortune of his house was largely dependent on the well-being of the bank at Lyons. So quietly and unostentatiously was this done that French ambassadors were instructed to act according to his advice, and he became the intermediary between Rome and Paris.<sup>1</sup> "Lorenzo," writes Dr. Creighton, "had striven to identify the Medici family with Florence, and had been himself the representative and expression of the desires and aspirations of Florentine life and culture. He had also learned that the existence of Italy depended upon the maintenance of internal peace, and his efforts for that end had, for the last ten years of his life, been unceasing. His early experience had taught him how difficult was the position

<sup>1</sup> It is probable that the French ambassadors who so often came to Florence found their journey was profitable. This was certainly the case with Philippe de Comines. See p. 312.

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which he had to maintain, that of chief citizen of a free city, whose fortunes and whose very existence depended on exercising absolute power without seeming to do so. It is easy to accuse him of insidiously destroying Florentine liberty; but the policy of Sixtus IV. left him no choice between such a course and retirement from Florence, and he may be pardoned if he doubted whether his abdication would conduce to the welfare of the city. He has been accused of abetting the moral enervation and corruption of his people; but the causes of this corruption are to be found in the general character of Italian life, and Lorenzo did no more than follow the prevailing fashion in lending his refinement to give expression to the popular taste. Lorenzo did what all Italian statesmen were doing; he identified his city for good and ill with his own house. He worked craftily and insidiously, not by open violence, and in the midst of his self-seeking he retained the large views of a statesman and embodied the culture of his age.”<sup>1</sup>

The Marquess Gino Capponi in his History of Florence writes: “The Medici palace was a museum, a school, and a place of meeting for all the learned men who flocked thither, from it proceeded grave counsel and intellectual teaching as well as shows and festivals, and a general corruption of manners. Two popes passed their childhood there, and the Platonic Academy, intended to raise the standard of life and thought, was founded within its walls. Poliziano and Pico della Mirandola, one of the greatest men of his time, were constant visitors. There the first chips flew off the marble under the chisel of Michelangelo, and there Luigi Pulci read the Morgante aloud. Such exuberance of life, such magnificence, such gaiety, has probably never been witnessed in any other age, and the name of Lorenzo towers above it all.”<sup>2</sup>

### RICORDI OF LORENZO THE MAGNIFICENT, SON OF PIERO DI COSIMO DE' MEDICI

A brief narrative of the course of my life and of some other important things worthy of remembrance for the guidance and

<sup>1</sup> *A History of the Papacy from the Great Schism to the Sack of Rome*, by M. Creighton, D.D. Oxon. and Cam., Lord Bishop of London, iv. 162. Longmans, Green & Co., 1897.

<sup>2</sup> *Istorie di Firenze*, Marchese Gino Capponi,

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information of those who will succeed me, and especially for my sons. Begun this day, the 15th March 1472.

I find from the books of Piero our father that I was born on January 1, 1449 [1450]. By our mother Maria Lucrezia di Francesco Tornabuoni our father had seven children, four male and three female, of whom four are still alive. They are Giuliano my brother, aged . . . and myself, aged twenty-four, Bianca, wife of Guglielmo de' Pazzi, and Nannina, wife of Bernardo Rucellai.

Giovanni d' Averardo, surnamed Bicci, de' Medici, our great-grandfather, died on the 20th February 1428, at the fourth hour of the night. He would not make a will, and left property to the amount of 179,221 scudi *di suggello*, as appears in a record in the handwriting of Cosimo our grandfather in his red leather book on page 7. The said Giovanni lived sixty-eight years, and left two sons, Cosimo our grandfather, then about forty, and Lorenzo, aged thirty.

Lorenzo had one son, Pier Francesco, born on . . . 1430, who is still alive.

Cosimo had two sons, our father Piero, born . . . and our uncle Giovanni, born . . . On September . . . 1433 our grandfather Cosimo was imprisoned in the Palace, and in danger of losing his head. On September 9th he was banished to Padua, together with his brother Lorenzo, a sentence confirmed by the Balia of 1433 on the 11th, and on the 16th December he was permitted to reside anywhere in the Venetian territory, but not nearer to Florence than Padua.

On September 29, 1434, the Council of the Balia revoked the sentence of exile, to the great joy of the whole city and of almost all Italy, and here [in Florence] he lived until his last day as head of the government of our Republic.

Lorenzo de' Medici, brother of Cosimo our grandfather, quitted this life at Careggi on September 20, 1440, aged about forty-six, at the fourth hour of the night, and would not make a will; Pier Francesco, his son, was his sole heir. The

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property amounted to 235,137 scudi *di suggello*, as appears in the said book kept by Cosimo on page 13, which amount Cosimo kept for the use and benefit of the said Pier Francesco, and for Piero and Giovanni, his own sons, until they were of proper age, as appears in the books of the said Cosimo, wherein is a detailed account of all.

On December . . . 1451 the said Pier Francesco being of age, we divided the property according to the arbitration of Messer Mannello degl' Strozzi, Bernardo de' Medici, Alamanno Salviati, Messer Carlo Marsuppino, Amerigo Cavalcanti, and Giovanni Serristori, by whom a liberal half of our possessions was assigned to him, giving him the advantage over us and the best things. The deed was drawn up by Ser' Antonio Pugi, notary, and at the same time we gave him an interest of one-third in our business, whereby he gained much more than we did as he had no expenses.

Giovanni, our uncle (*et hujus quidem ingenio et virtute, plurimum confidebat Cosmus, qua propter ejus interitu maxime dohuit*), died on November 1, 1463, in our house in Florence, without making a will, because he had no children and was under parental tutelage. But all his last wishes were faithfully carried out. By Maria Ginevra degl' Alessandri he had a son named Cosimo, who died in November 1461, at about the age of nine.

Cosimo our grandfather, a man of exceeding wisdom, died at Careggi on August 1, 1464, being much debilitated by old age and by gout, to the great grief not only of ourselves and of the whole city but of all Italy, because he was most famous and adorned with many singular virtues. He died in the highest position any Florentine citizen ever attained at any period, and was buried in S. Lorenzo. He refused to make a will and forbade all pomp at his funeral. Nevertheless all the Italian princes sent to do him honour and to condole with us on his death; among others H.M. the King of France commanded that he should be honoured with his banner,



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but out of respect for his wishes our father would not allow it. By public decree he was named PATER PATRIS, and the decree and the letters patent are in our house. After his death much sedition arose in the city, especially was our father persecuted out of envy. From this sprang the parliament and the change of government in 1466, when Messer Agnolo Acciaiuoli, Messer Diotisalvi, Niccolò Soderini, and others were exiled, and the State was reformed.

In the year 1465 H.M. King Louis of France, out of regard for the friendship between our grandfather, our father, and the House of France, decorated our escutcheon with three Lilies d'or on a field azure, which we carry at present. We have the patents with the royal seal attached, which was approved and confirmed in the Palace with nine beans [votes].

In July 1467 came the Duke Galeazzo of Milan. He was fighting against Bartolomeo of Bergamo in the Romagna, who was vexing our State. By his own wish he lodged in our house, although the Signory had prepared everything for him in S. Maria Novella.

In February or in March of the same year Sarzana, Sarzanelle, and Castelnuovo were bought by the aid of our father Piero from M. Lorenzo and M. Tommasino da Campofregoso; notwithstanding that we were engaged in hot war the payment was made by Francesco Sassetti, our confidential agent, at that time one of the managers of the *Monte*.

I, Lorenzo, took to wife Clarice, daughter of the Lord Jacopo Orsini, or rather she was given (*i.e.* betrothed) to me in December 1468, and the marriage was celebrated in our house on June 4, 1469. Till now I have by her two children, a girl called Lucrezia, of . . . years, and a boy named Piero, of . . . months. Clarice is again with child. God preserve her to us for many years and guard us from all evil. Twin boys were born prematurely at about five or six months old, they lived long enough to be baptized.

In July 1469 I went to Milan at the request of the



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Illustrious Duke Galeazzo to stand godfather as proxy for Piero our father to his firstborn child. I was received with much honour, more so than the others who came for the same purpose, although they were persons more worthy than I. We paid our duty to the Duchess by presenting her with a necklace of gold with a large diamond, which cost near 2000 ducats. The consequence was that the said Lord desired that I should stand godfather to all his children.

To do as others had done I held a joust in the Piazza S. Croce at great expense and with great pomp. I find we spent about 10,000 ducats *di suggello*, and although I was not highly versed in the use of weapons and the delivery of blows, the first prize was given to me; a helmet fashioned of silver, with Mars as the crest.

Piero, our father, departed this life on July 2nd, aged . . . having been much tormented with gout. He would not make a will, but we drew up an inventory and found we possessed 237,988 scudi, as is recorded by me in a large green book bound in kid. He was buried in S. Lorenzo, and we are still at work to make his and his brother Giovanni's tomb as worthy to receive his bones as we can. God have mercy on their souls. He was much mourned by the whole city, being an upright man and exceedingly kindly. The princes of Italy, especially the principal ones, sent letters and envoys to condole with us and offer us their help for our defence.

The second day after his death, although I, Lorenzo, was very young, being twenty years of age, the principal men of the city and of the State came to us in our house to condole with us on our loss and to encourage me to take charge of the city and of the State, as my grandfather and my father had done. This I did, though on account of my youth and the great responsibility and perils arising therefrom, with great reluctance, solely for the safety of our friends and of our possessions. FOR IT IS ILL LIVING IN FLORENCE FOR THE RICH UNLESS THEY RULE THE STATE. Till now we have succeeded with

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honour and renown, which I attribute not to prudence but to the grace of God and the good conduct of my predecessors.

I find that from 1434 till now we have spent large sums of money, as appear in a small quarto note-book of the said year to the end of 1471. Incredible are the sums written down. They amount to 663,755 florins for alms, buildings, and taxes, let alone other expenses. But I do not regret this, for though many would consider it better to have a part of that sum in their purse, I consider that it gave great honour to our State, and I think the money was well expended, and am well pleased.

In the month of September 1471 I was elected to go as ambassador for the coronation of Pope Sixtus, and was treated with great honour. I brought back the two antique marble heads, portraits of Augustus and Agrippa, given to me by the said Pope Sixtus, and also our cup of chalcedony incised, and many other cameos which I then bought.

The following adjunct is written on the fly-leaf of a small codex in the archive in Florence without any date, but probably in 1483-5, containing a list of letters written by Lorenzo to various people, and above is written *Ricordi di Lorenzo de' Medici*. All the first part is in a codex in the Nazionale Library, a copy of Lorenzo's *Ricordi*, the original of which seems no longer to exist. It differs somewhat from the version given by Roscoe, which he says was in Lorenzo's own handwriting.

On the 19th day of September [1483] came the news that the King of France by his own free will had given to our Giovanni the Abbey of Fonte Dolce. On the 31st we heard from Rome that the Pope had ratified this and declared him capable of holding benefices, being seven years of age, and had created him a Protonotary. On the 1st June our Giovanni came from Poggio [a Caiano] and I with him. On his arrival he was confirmed by our Monsignore of Arezzo [Gentile Becchi] who gave him the tonsure, and thereafter he was called Messer Giovanni. These ceremonies took place in our own chapel, and in the evening we returned to Poggio. On the 8th June

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Jacopino, the courier from France, arrived about twelve of the clock with letters from the king, who has bestowed on our Messer Giovanni the Archbishopric of Aix en Provence, and after vespers the man was despatched to Rome about this business, with letters from the King of France to the Pope and the Cardinal of Macon, and to Count Girolamo, to whom we sent at the same hour letters by the courier Zenino to Forlì. God grant that all will be well.

On the 11th Zenino returned from the Count with letters for the Pope and the Cardinal of S. Giorgio, and we forwarded them to Rome by the Milan post. God grant that all will be well. On the same day after Mass in the chapel the daughters and sons of the house were confirmed, with the exception of Messer Giovanni.

On the 15th, at six in the evening, came letters from Rome saying that the Pope raised difficulties about giving the archbishopric to Messer Giovanni on account of his youth, and the courier was at once sent on to the King of France.

On the 20th came news from Lionetto that the Archbishop was not dead.

On March 1, 1484 (1485), the Abbot of Pasignano died and we at once sent off an express messenger to Messer Giovanni d'Antonio Vespucci, our ambassador at Rome, to do all he could to obtain this abbey for our Messer Giovanni. On the 2nd we took possession of the estate under the seal of the Signoria, by reason of the reservation made by Pope Sixtus to our Messer Giovanni, confirmed by Innocent during the visit of our Piero to Rome to do obeisance.<sup>1</sup>

### AGNOLO POLIZIANO to LORENZO DE' MEDICI

Magnificent Lorenzo, to whom heaven has given charge of the city and the State, first citizen of Florence, doubly crowned with bays lately for war in S. Croce amid the acclamations of

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza 63.

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the people [alluding to the tournament] and for poetry on account of the sweetness of your verses, give ear to me who drinking at Greek sources am striving to set Homer into Latin metre. This second book which I have translated (you know we have the first by Messer Carlo d' Arezzo)<sup>1</sup> comes to you and timidly crosses your threshold. If you welcome it I propose to offer to you all the Iliad. It rests with you, who can, to help the poet. I desire no other muse or other Gods but only you; by your help I can do that of which the ancients would not have been ashamed. May it please you therefore at your leisure to give audience to Homer. The young translator, if assailed by a Zoilus, commends himself to you.—  
Your servant,  
AGNOLO POLIZIANO, 1470.<sup>2</sup>

Lorenzo, poet and fine critic, at once sent for the youth, installed him in his palace in Via Larga and bade him continue his work. This is the first letter Poliziano wrote to Lorenzo.<sup>3</sup>

The following letter to Contessina, Lorenzo's grandmother,

<sup>1</sup> Marsuppini.

<sup>2</sup> *Florentia*, Isidoro del Lungo, p. 119.

3 Agnolo Poliziano, born in 1454, was the son of Benedetto de' Cini, commonly called Ambrogini, a lawyer. He dropped his family name and took that of Poliziano from his native town Montepulciano (Mons Politianus). His father was murdered when he was a child of eight and he was sent to Florence to live with an uncle, Cino di Mattei, a poor man who lived near Piazza-S. Spirito in Via Saturno. Poliziano studied rhetoric under Cristoforo Landino, and Andronico, philosophy under Argiropulos and Marsilio Ficino, in the Florentine Studio from his fifteenth to his twentieth year. Lorenzo de' Medici, after reading his translation of Homer, provided for his education, and he became one of Lorenzo's most intimate friends, tutor to his children and his librarian. Poliziano took his degree as Doctor of Law, and entering the Church was made a Canon of the cathedral of Florence. He wrote scholia and notes to Ovid, Catullus, Statius, Suetonius, Pliny the Younger, and the *Historiæ Augustæ*; translated the History of Herodian, the Manuel of Epictetus, the Aphorisms of Hippocrates, some Dialogues of Plato, and other works from Greek into Latin. His *Miscellanea*, published in Florence in 1489, were arranged for the press at Lorenzo's request. Poliziano's Italian poetry, particularly the *Stanze per la Giostra*, or Tournament, of Giuliano de' Medici is beautiful, and his *Sylvæ*, odes, epigrams, and other short Latin poems are celebrated. He also wrote *Panepistemon*, a category of the various branches of knowledge, and when quite a lad the *Orfeo*, one of the earliest Italian operas. So popular was the *Orfeo* that it was printed either separately or with the *Stanze* twenty times between 1494 and 1541, and thirteen times between 1541 and 1565. For the use of the common people a redaction in octave stanzas was published in Florence in 1558 called *La Historia e Favola d'Orfeo alla dolce lira*. The last reprint was in 1860.

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written in 1471 when Lorenzo and five other eminent Florentine citizens went to Rome to pay their respects to the newly elected Pontiff, shows how men turned to the Medici for aid, and that the women of the family had more influence than is generally supposed. Sixtus IV. named Lorenzo treasurer to the Holy See and gave him the two busts mentioned in his *Ricordi*. He was also able to buy many fine medals, cameos, &c., as the Pope knew nothing and cared less about art, and only thought of turning the collection made by Paul II. into money. It was probably during this visit that the nomination of Giuliano de' Medici to the cardinalate was broached, and Sixtus and Lorenzo, who were afterwards implacable foes, parted the best of friends.

The next letter is from the poet Luigi Pulci who was sent to treat with King Ferrante about establishing a branch of the Medici bank at Naples, but in order not to arouse the jealousy of the Duke of Milan he ostensibly went to get fine horses. The King gave him two for Lorenzo, but turned a deaf ear to the gentle hints about allowing Garetto, probably a stud groom, to enter Lorenzo's service. Soon after Pulci's return he accompanied Clarice to Rome for the marriage of one of her brothers, which was however put off.

### A. ALEXANDER DI CONIO to CONTESSINA DE' MEDICI

MAGNIFICENT AND NOBLE LADY,—It is a usual thing when in need to address those in whom one has firm faith. Having therefore heard that the Magnificent Lorenzo has been named ambassador to His Sanctity our Holy Father, and having two sons of nearly the same age who are only desirous to do what is pleasing to you, I send one to you, praying with all my heart that it may please him to take the lad with him as his page, or attendant, or relation, or in any position he chooses. And as there is no recommendation like a mother's I send him to you, beseeching you in God's name to arrange that he should, if possible, take him instead of some stranger. If he be already provided, then may it please you to give him to your Giuliano or to whomso else you think fit, so that he may acquire some



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knowledge by your help, for he is apt: if he remains here he will learn nothing. I grieve to give you so much trouble, but I grieve more to see him anxious to learn and not to be able to help him, save through your being moved to take compassion on him. I beg you for the love of God not to abandon him, for he has a good nature and a desire to do well, and God in His grace will repay you for me. I know you are aware of my condition and so do not recall it to you; have no regard for his nobility, if you cannot place him as I said, he will always be well pleased. I give him to you entirely, and as you would accept a dog as a gift you can accept a human creature who is more faithful. I entreat you to deal with him in every way according to your wishes.

May God Almighty preserve and keep you in happiness.—  
In Conio, on the 2nd day of September 1471.

A. ALEXANDER DI CONIO.

## LUIGI PULCI to LORENZO DE' MEDICI at Florence

*Magnifice et generose vir et major honorande, &c.*—I know not if thou hast received my two letters from Naples. By the replies I doubt it, and therefore repeat some portions. In the last I told thee that H.M. the King, hearing that thy liking for his Fals' Amico and Abruzzese still continued, has decided to send them both.<sup>1</sup> I know this because as soon as I returned to Naples the other day Count Matalona said to Gostino Billiotti, who went to see his garden, "Our Lord the King has ordered two fine horses to be sent to your Magnificent Lorenzo, and says if he wishes for others he is to say so, for finding that he takes pleasure in them, the King intends to keep him supplied, and that nothing would give him greater pleasure than to be asked for others, or for anything else." We thanked him, and also sent thanks to H.M. the King, adding that the sooner they were sent the more welcome they would be. Yesterday

<sup>1</sup> Horses Lorenzo may have seen when he was at Naples in 1468,



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we saw the Count again, and he told us that Messer Antonio Cicinello was to take the horses: he is to leave in two days, and to go to thee as ambassador. So the horses will be there in twelve days, and as I think thou wilt like them I am well pleased. In Rome I heard from Garetto that thy wish is to take him into thy service, so we have dropped gentle hints of this to H.M. the King, and now let them work. Messer Marino has done this skilfully, but the drum must not be beaten too hard, for he has been more glad to give thee these horses than thou art to have them. During these last days he talked of thee for several hours with Garetto in the presence of the Count and asked much about Giuliano, what he was like and what were his favourite pursuits. He showed such a desire to see him that one of these days thou wilt have to grant him permission to come here, where he will be received with such pleasure, and with so much honour, that all at home will be astonished: I am not exaggerating. Thou canst believe me as thou knowest, and when I return I will tell thee things that will please thee.

Hadst thou done as I said, and written a line, thou wouldest have had Garetto. Certes thou hast not done this, but we will do what we can; he never tires praising thee, and wishes to live and die in thy service.

A large army is being collected here against the Turks, but the King's ambassador writes that he has small hope of any help from thee. I trust God may convert thee during Lent, and cause thee to behave as a Christian. I shall soon be with thee. My poor Bernardo has I know need of thine aid at the *Monte* about his dower, which cost us 5 per cent. with the sister-in-law who appeared to be our friend, Luca's dower.<sup>1</sup> Bernardo is timid by nature, and not enterprising like me; so I pray thee to give him the help he asks if thou canst.

All thy doings are much discussed here, with us thou art in good hands, and above all thou art the darling of our Lord

<sup>1</sup> Bernardo and Luca were brothers of Luigi Pulci.

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the King. May God preserve thee. I commend myself to thee.—Naples, February 27, 1471 (1472).

To Giuliano and to all I commend myself and send greetings. Written in haste.

Put Dionigi on Abruzzese, so that he may, like Francesco de' Pazzi, regain his lady's love; but do not keep him shut up as on the day of S. John.

*Post Scriptum.*—The Duke has told Gostino that the horses are to leave to-morrow with one of his own men, who will not be Garetto; but early in the morning I will try whether by means of Count Matalona it cannot be arranged. A handsome and good horse, much admired here, is also being sent for our Gugliemo de' Pazzi, who will be pleased.<sup>1</sup> Commend me to him.

THY LUIGI PULCI.

### CLARICE DE' MEDICI to her husband LORENZO

*Magnifice vir et coniux amantissime*,—By the present you will know what has occurred since we left. The first evening we reached Figline and stayed at S. Cerbone with Giovanni d'Antonio, who received us with great honour, and treated us with still more, as did the women of his family and some of his sisters-in-law. Then by his and Filippo's advice, after a rest at Levane, on the second evening we arrived at Arezzo, and Morello—that is, Antonio da Pantaneto—greeted us with such honour that we were much moved. We were visited by the Captain and the Podestà and those of the Commune with such things as they deemed would do us honour, and at our arrival and departure we were accompanied by many men of worth with diverse instruments. Before starting, the Podestà of Castiglione sent a special messenger, and begged and entreated us to dine the following morning with him, which we did with the more pleasure as we heard he was much attached

<sup>1</sup> Brother-in-law of Lorenzo de' Medici.

<sup>2</sup> *Lettere di Luigi Pulci*, op. cit. 47.

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

to your Magnificence. Then we were visited by those of the Commune, and this evening we shall be in Cortona with the Captain, who hearing from Braccio of our arrival sent as far as Castiglione to meet us. Here we have been received with joyous faces and great honour by the Captain and the Commune. We shall continue our journey with gladness, as we have done till now, if by your letter we hear that you have commended us to Mona Contessina and Mona Lucrezia, and that my Lucrezia and Piero are well. Commend me to Bianca and Nannina. If you have any news which you deem it is not necessary to keep secret we pray you not to consider it too much trouble to write me a line: it would give us great pleasure. No more at present.—April 24, 1472.<sup>1</sup> • CLARICE.

### LUIGI PULCI to LORENZO DE' MEDICI

Ardito will have given thee my letter from Sabina. From thence we went for some days to Monte Rotondo,<sup>2</sup> and were received with much honour. Yesterday we entered Rome in pomp with about eighty horse. Our Madonna Clarice does thee great honour everywhere, and much is paid to her. In two days I shall return to the Marches, and then to thee. According to my idea the stay here will be short—I mean thy wife's—for as thou knowest the wedding is put off. In this case we only lose time and reputation, besides which Lucrezina and Pierino draw us back to them like magnets. Thou wouldst do well to advise a quick return. Whenever great personages, men or women, stay for long in one place they are pestered and taken as targets. Besides, some of us will be useful to thee for the feast of S. Giovanni; more than a year has passed since the last, and I know that without us things will lag. Enough that if I have the hope that as usual *festaiuoli*<sup>3</sup> are to be

<sup>1</sup> *Donne Medicee*, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup> A castle and townlet belonging to the Orsini.

<sup>3</sup> Directors of feasts. *Festaiuoli* still go about in the villages in Tuscany to collect money for processions and church festivals.

## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

appointed, I shall whisper something into the ear of one of them that will delight him. I rather wonder at thy letting this feast pass with so little recognition, being so good a citizen and lover of thy country, whose protector is S. Giovannni; we should therefore do him honour. If by any mischance we are not back in time, thou wilt see how ill they get on without us. I have said enough to be understood, believe in one who has sharp eyes and can speak the truth. Send for us. We take the road by Siena, and shall look out for falls, but at last we shall arrive triumphantly.

To-day there is strange news from Volterra. They say H.M. the King [of Naples] has sent word to the Count of Urbino that he is to march and do what he can. All the follies I said unfortunately turn out to be prophecies. Now act so that things may go well. Monsignor of Pavia speaks only of thee. If I understand anything he is thy true friend. No more. Farewell.—Rome, May 6, 1472. THY LUIGI PULCI.<sup>1</sup>

### LORENZO DE' MEDICI to SIXTUS IV.<sup>2</sup>

*Sanctissime et Beatissime Pater*,—To avoid troubling your Beatitude I have written to Giovanni Tornabuoni and told him to talk with you about the long-standing desire of our house to have a Cardinal. Although I have such entire faith in Your Sanctity that I am sure it is needless again to solicit what was so freely promised, nevertheless as there is a report that Cardinals are soon to be created I thought it best to remind your Beatitude of this our desire; supplicating with all humility that to our other everlasting obligations your Beatitude will deign to add this one, which will be the greatest and the most prized, as Giovanni will explain. I beg Your Beatitude to accord him the same confidence as though I was speaking

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, &c., *op. cit.* ii. 27.

<sup>2</sup> This and the letters from the Cardinal of Pavia (pp. 167–171) relate to Lorenzo's desire that his brother Giuliano should be created a cardinal in order to have a voice in the Consistory. What he was unable to achieve for his brother he afterwards obtained for his son Giovanni.

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with Your Holiness, at whose feet I commend myself and my affairs with all humility.—Florence, November 21, 1472.

*Humilis Servus,*

LAURENTIUS DE MEDICIS.<sup>1</sup>

The following letter was written after Lorenzo's visit to Volterra. The city had rebelled against Florence in consequence of a dispute between a company in which Florentine shareholders were interested, and the Commune of Volterra about an alum mine. The Commune alleged that the lease was illegal and seized the mine, whereupon the company appealed to the Signoria of Florence. Volterra had already, in 1429, attempted to rise against the imposition of the *catasto*, and the Florentines now determined to take severe measures.<sup>2</sup> Duke Federigo of Urbino, the Florentine general, in command of some six thousand men, including contingents from the Pope and the Duke of Milan, attacked the city. Her mercenaries refused to fight, and she capitulated after a

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, op. cit. ii. 62.

<sup>2</sup> The *catasto* of 1427 was a register or list of all who were bound to pay taxes to the Commune of Florence. It runs: "1. Ten officials are to be appointed to compile the register. 2. All families liable to be taxed are to be inscribed in four books; their number, ages, health, capacity, and occupation. 3. All their possessions, movable and immovable, are to be inscribed, whether within the confines of the State or abroad, monies in existence, or what is owing to them, their slaves and whatever belongs to them. 4. In the same way other partial *catasti* shall be drawn up, as of peasants, universities, and guilds, foreigners and other persons not generally liable to be taxed. 5. The income of each separate possession is to be noted, so that the capital value may be ascertained, and 100 florins shall be taken as the valuation for every 7 florins of income. 6. From such valuation shall be deducted the inherent expenses, rent of houses, of shops, the price of horses for personal use, and 2 florins per head. 7. The net income being thus reduced, 10 golden soldi are to be paid on every 100 golden florins, equal to the tenth part of a percentage at 5 per cent. 8. On every person deducted as above, between eighteen years of age and sixty, an arbitrary tax shall be imposed, not to exceed 2 florins. 9. It is left to the discretion of the officials, in case no surplus remains after the above deductions, to impose a tax to be arranged with the persons taxed. 10. Whoso declares a false income shall have his possessions confiscated. 11. Should any contention arise the decision of the officials is final; they may not diminish the amount of the tax, save for the repayment of a dower, until the new *catasto*, without the approbation of the Great Council, but they may augment it. 12. The *catasto* is to be corrected and compiled anew every three years. 13. All taxes are henceforward to be regulated by the *catasto*." *Osservatore Fiorentino*, i. 91. Signor A. Rabbini, *Dell' accertamento catastale*, &c., defines the *catasto* as at present existing as "a public document serving as an absolutely legal and fundamental base for the imposition of taxes on landed property and a guide in judicial or administrative procedure involving the settlement of questions regarding landed property and the rights and obligations of the owners thereof."



## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

siege of twenty-five days. When the troops entered there was an uproar, caused it is said by a mercenary in the service of the city, which was sacked and the inhabitants were brutally maltreated in spite of the efforts of the Florentine commanders.<sup>1</sup> Many historians have accused Lorenzo of being the prime instigator of the attack on Volterra in order to get control of the alum mine. But his name is not in the list of shareholders and the deposit of alum was too small to compete with the mines of Tolfa of which he was the lessee (see pp. 98-99), and was soon afterwards abandoned.

### INGHERAMI DI VOLTERRA, *Apostolic Scribe*, to LORENZO DE' MEDICI

*Magnifice vir et protector mi singularis commendatione premissa, &c.,*—I derived great consolation from the visit of Your Magnificence to Volterra. With your own eyes you should see and judge far better than by listening to the accounts of others of the public and private despair and misery here. You have seen the afflicted and faithful friends and servants of Your Magnificence naked, despoiled of all their goods, robbed without mercy, for everything was taken during the sack of the city; and I doubt not that Your Magnificence with your kindly nature was moved to great compassion. Your arrival and seeing with your own eyes has been the sole hope of this people and has consoled and comforted them greatly. Therefore by this present and by other letters I have written to Your Magnificence (I know not whether you received them), I beg and pray of you not to allow them to be deprived of that hope, and to show them your justice and

<sup>1</sup> Luca Landucci in his Diary (1450-1516) notes: "On June 18, 1472, came a horseman with the olive branch [from Volterra] announcing the capitulation; the people and their property to be respected. Great was the rejoicing. But when we entered the city one of their officers, a Venetian, shouted "Pillage," and our men began to pillage and we could not stop them or observe the articles of capitulation. The Count Federigo d'Urbino caused the Venetian and a Siennese to be hung." *Diario Fiorentino di Luca Landucci*. Firenze, 1883. See also *La Vita Italiana nel Rinascimento, Lorenzo de' Medici*, E. Masi, i. 31. Milano, 1893.



## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

grace by helping and restoring, and listening to the prayers of this wretched and miserable city. Now that she belongs faithfully and devotedly to Your Magnificence and to the Florentine State she ceases to be an enemy. All now depends on Your Magnificence. We do not so much expect as feel certain that we shall receive this help from you; first from your own goodness, and then for love of the blessed memory of the grandfather and father of Your Magnificence, to whom this poor and miserable city, which always formed part and parcel of the house of Your Magnificence, showed such reverence. Especially we your partisans, for our affection and devotion, have been so ill-treated and smitten that we are reduced to nothing, unless Your Magnificence, who has never known what it is to be ungrateful or unjust, does not let us share in your victory as belonging entirely to you, and taking pity on our unhappy and miserable condition will care for and guard us, who desire only to live and die under the protection of Your Magnificence, whom God preserve in happiness.—Volterra, March 10, 1472 (1473).<sup>1</sup>

### FRANCESCO FILELFO to LORENZO DE' MEDICI <sup>2</sup>

*Magnifice et Clarissime Vir*, — The Magnificent Messer Ciccho, my compeer, has advised me that I should be better and more quickly employed in the service of friends of this

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, op. cit. ii. 63.

<sup>2</sup> Francesco Filelfo, born at Tolentino in 1398, was a famous classical scholar. He studied at Padua, was sent as Secretary of Legation to Constantinople by the Signoria of Venice, and afterwards taught Greek in Venice, Bologna, Florence, &c. When Cosimo de' Medici was imprisoned he urged the Signoria to put him to death and poured out abominable accusations against him and his friends in the *Book of Exile*. Poggio replied, accusing Filelfo of the most heinous crimes, and the war of words went on for years. When Cosimo returned to Florence Filelfo fled to Milan and allied himself with Albizzi and the other exiles, but soon made abject advances to Cosimo, which were treated with silent disdain. After Cosimo's death he sent humble letters to Lorenzo and his brother and wrote *Cosmias*, a poem in praise of the man he had abused. Lorenzo at length allowed him to return to Florence where he died in 1481. He was mean, arrogant, and intensely vain.

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Illustrious Lord [Duke of Milan] than in Rome or any other place, and has mentioned the chair which Your Illustrious Republic has instituted anew at Pisa. Advice was indeed unnecessary, for I desire nothing better than to be in a place where I can use my abilities in the service of that renowned Signoria, and more particularly in yours, to whom I am so indebted. But considering your laws against rebels, among whom, thanks to Carlo d'Arezzo and Poggio with their crew, I was most unjustly included, I have delayed making any application as I thought it would be useless. Now however that my beloved compeer has again mentioned it, and remembering the Greek proverb that the potter fixes the handle on whichever side of the pot seems best to him, I have determined to write to you and to beg Your Magnificence to consider this, for you well know that in this land you cannot find another Philelphus or a man more devoted to yourself.

Then about my coats which are together with the books which you have recovered for me. They are three, two of crimson velvet, the other a cloak of rose-coloured cloth lined with rose-coloured silk. You would do me a great service if you would order the cloak to be given back to me as I need it now the weather is warmer, also it might be spoiled by cockroaches, as it is together with those that are lined with fur. *Vale spes mia.*—Milan, April 23, 1473.<sup>1</sup>

JACOPO AMMANATI, *Cardinal of Pavia, to LORENZO DE' MEDICI*

LORENZO MINE,—Your Donato having provided me with spectacles to see far and near, I now write to try whether they are good. And you will have patience if it is not clear, for nature's laws are inexorable. I will be as brief as possible. It will not be long before the Holy Father will be obliged

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, op. cit. ii. 75.

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to make new Cardinals, particularly for those States which have none. You, for instance, are without, which for many reasons is unseemly. There has been much talk here of your Giuliano, and by fishing at the fountain-head I find he has been mentioned in the proper quarter. I know not what are your intentions, and do not pretend to give advice as I am sure you know the needs of your house better than I. All I say is that you must make up your mind. If you do think of Giuliano I doubt he may be too unpolished at present to please here; it would be better for him to assume the surplice of the Church or of a Protonotary, then I think there would be no difficulty. If, to avoid any accidents and to preserve your house or for any other reason, this plan does not please you (and the suggestion should come from others and not from yourself), you had better reflect whether the Archbishop of Pisa<sup>1</sup> or any one else would suit you, and take measures, for to remain inert is unwise, particularly as you consider that a Cardinal would be useful to the city and to yourself. Choose any one, so he is not a person to be ashamed of. On my part whatever aid a poor priest can give is yours as is my bounden duty. For this I have written you these few words, which accept as from a good friend and a lover of you and of your country, to which I owe much. *Bene Valet.*—*Romæ*, April 25, 1473.<sup>2</sup>

JACOPO AMMANATI, *Cardinal of Pavia, to*  
LORENZO DE' MEDICI

LORENZO MINE,—This is the result of a long conversation with Giovanni [Tornabuoni]. I am not in the position to advise you whether it would be well to continue this affair of your Giuliano, because it depends on the state of things in

<sup>1</sup> Filippo de' Medici.

<sup>2</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, op. cit. ii. 58.

## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

Florence, with which I am not familiar. You know them better than I. Only I wished for information *in utramque partem*, whether yes or no. To begin with, any possible danger to yourself or to your house is a matter that must be considered, for many eyes are upon you both at home and abroad ; a man sees and hopes to be able to give one blow, who has no hope of giving two, and thinks that striking one adversary will serve his purpose ; but the other would remain, and thus his design would fail. Braccio of Perugia did not attack his enemy, Messer Pandolfo, until after many months he saw father and son together in one place ; then having both, he cut the tree and its roots with one stroke. Besides this danger there is the other of sickness, which occurs every day. Should it please God to call you to Himself, and Giuliano were in the position we are striving for while your children were still young, it seems to me your house would be in danger to lose the pre-eminence left by Cosimo to Piero, and by Piero to you, and with the pre-eminence lose the riches, and thus close the door against your successors. On the other hand, there is the reputation which would be acquired by the enhanced dignity of Giuliano, the aid he might give to your State, and the certainty of having a trusty person in the College. Then one hopes that, as danger increases, your watchfulness would also increase, that God in His mercy will preserve you, and that you may live long enough to see your children be a support to you, and finally that they will inherit your high position. But, as I said before, you must judge according to matters domestic and public in Florence what is best to be done. Speaking for myself, nothing would be more pleasing than to have the company of Giuliano, and we having such a pledge should be entitled to expect faithful aid from your State. His joyous nature would make us all jocund and happy.

Let us therefore assume that you say Yes. I will tell you frankly my opinion how the business ought to be managed. I consider it necessary that he should be made a Protonotary

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and be seen in that dress for at least a month ; for none of us would venture to suggest that from a layman he should at once be promoted to so high a position. But I should not let him take any holy orders until what he desires has been accomplished, so that if difficulties arise he may be at liberty to return to his usual dress, a thing I have seen done quite justifiably by others. His position would not be that of a full Cardinal ; *videlicet* he would only have four or six chaplains in his train, and eight equerries to precede him. Because, although we are sure to do much more for him, here humility is much prized. *In reliquis*, between Messer Gentile [Bishop of Arezzo] and myself, for I shall regard him as my son, he shall be so advised as to gain universal commendation. I see no difficulty, if his Holiness lives, to his attaining the highest honour, for I can promise for more than one [vote]. Have no uneasiness about the cardinals who have just been made, as it will be necessary soon to create others for the Emperor and King Ferdinand, for Rome and for you Florentines, if you desire it ; it had been arranged to await Pentecost for their nominations, but certain reasons, as you will have heard, induced greater haste. In short, Lorenzo, examine well my advice and that of others who are better informed, which I think you will have received : *et tandem* put your trust in God as to what path to pursue. Take a courageous course, and tell me what you wish done. It would, however, be well beforehand to inform the Duke of Milan, *et quidem pro forma*, in order that he should not say No to what you desire ; if you are in doubt ask for his real opinion. For my own satisfaction I have not contented myself with writing to Giovanni [Tornabuoni], but have scrawled these lines. I am fond of you, and I love you, not your position or your riches. Charity bids me say everything openly, and attribute everything to her. *Dominus Deus sit in corde vestro, et dirigat gressus vestros in semitam rectam.* That He should do this increase your donations to pious works and cause special prayers to be made, for in truth the affair is not a light one,



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or of small importance, and all in my judgment depends on His clemency. *Bene Valet.*—Rome, May 15, 1473.<sup>1</sup>

This letter is inserted to show how all in trouble or distress turned for help to Madonna Lucrezia, knowing her kindly disposition, and the great influence she had over her son Lorenzo.

### THE SYNDIC AND ANCIENTS OF GALATEA to LUCREZIA DE' MEDICI

*Magnifica ac generosa domina nostra singularissima*,—Your Magnificence is aware how attached and bound to your house our community has always been and will be as long as life lasts. This encourages us to turn to you in our necessities and troubles, and also in those of any of our friends who have need to have recourse to Your Magnificence who has always been kind to us and helped us. We hope now more than ever in you on account of the great faith we all have in your house; for could you but know you would find the name of your family written in the hearts of big and little of our community. Now Magnificent Madonna, after such long and tedious words, we come to implore aid from Your Magnificence. It is several months since one Ser Michele, a priest, was seized by the Lords of Vazoca, they say for coining money, and after suffering much torture he was put in the Stinche,<sup>2</sup> thus it may be conceived that he has been sufficiently punished for his sins. Here live some relations of his, honourable men, who are desirous for the honour of the world to liberate him from such misery, and we, agreeing with him, come to beg Your Magnificence to ask them [the Lords of Vazoca] to allow him to be released from this wretchedness so that he should not die in such infamy. Your Magnificence would be doing a most kind act to this com-

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, op. cit. ii. 59.

<sup>2</sup> The prison at Florence.



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munity for which we shall be ever grateful. We commend him strongly to you, and also we commend ourselves, offering to Your Magnificence your ever ready and most faithful servants the Syndic General *Vexillifori et Antiani* of the Commune of Galatea.—Ex Galatea, 23rd August 1473.<sup>1</sup>

FRA CRISTOFANO D'ANTONIO DI MAST . . . to  
LUCREZIA DE' MEDICI

ILLUSTRIOUS MATRON AND LADY,—I have not written before, because I know that my news will have reached you in other letters. Nevertheless the more good one hears of one's family the more contented and happy one is ; let us thank God heartily with words and acts, as S. Paul says to the Ephesians in the epistle we shall read on Sunday morning.

To begin with, Mona Contessina is well. Giuliano is as usual. I have often been to see Mona Bianca<sup>2</sup> who is well, and her children have been for three days with Mona Contessina to her great delight. Lucrezia still has a little eczema, otherwise she is well, and is well cared for by Mona Nanna and she . . .<sup>3</sup> ; little Lucrezia is obedient, like the wise little person she is. Piero has a fine colour and is happy and full of spirits, by the grace of God ; he often comes to the side door calling you all, saying Granny, Papa, and Mamma, so that you would laugh if you were here. Maddalena is also well and every day when I return from the house of the Tornabuoni I go to stay a little with her, and to the wet nurse I say, "Now go, walk a little ;" so that she may amuse herself and take some exercise, and thus keep in good health and have better milk. She is very pleased, and thanks me saying, "I shall pray to God for you." Of a truth she serves you faithfully and well. Mona Nannina's<sup>4</sup> Cosimino is well but will not read, saying, "I did

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza xxix. No. 675.

<sup>2</sup> Lorenzo's sister married to Guglielmo de' Pazzi.

<sup>3</sup> A piece torn out of the letter.

<sup>4</sup> Lorenzo's sister married to Bernardo Rucellai.

## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

not come into the country to read." This displeases Mona Contessina. In November we will make up for lost time. Galasso<sup>1</sup> comes to read with me every morning, and then I go, for love of the children, back with him. He gives me much trouble, although it does not seem great to me, because I do it willingly for the love of God, and for love of Lorenzo, Mona Clarice, and you, for you know I am yours. I have even for the honour of God made him learn by heart little by little the *Salve Regina*, and part of the introit and of the psalter. Sister Magante has gone to another world, *requiescat in pace*. I know that you must have many petitioners, but when any little thing like this of small value falls in, think of me, you know my need, and that you would have a faithful servant. All your relations are well. Mona Bartolomea and Mona Francesca often go to see Mona Contessina and the children. The men are well also. All commend themselves to you. I commend myself to you, to Lorenzo, to Mona Clarice, and to Mona Nannina. No more. Christ guard you from ill.—September 25, 1473.

YOUR CRISTOFANO D'ANTONIO DI MAST . . .

Priest . . .<sup>2</sup>

## MATTEO FRANCO to LORENZO DE' MEDICI<sup>3</sup>

LORENZO MINE,—Have mercy. God well knows how and in what attitude I write to you. A chopping-board on my bed, whereon lies my paper, my arm bare with the sleeve rolled up,

<sup>1</sup> Probably a slave.

<sup>2</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza xxix. No. 822.

<sup>3</sup> Born in Florence of poor parents named Della Badessa, Matteo, as was often done in the fifteenth century, adopted his father's Christian name and became Matteo Franco. As a lad he entered the church, and some of his first efforts in poetry are sonnets addressed to the Archbishop of Florence begging in the name of S. Peter for a cloak. He made friends with Angelo Poliziano who probably introduced him to the Medici. Witty, clever, kind-hearted, Matteo soon became indispensable to Lorenzo, who speaks of him as "among the first and best-loved creatures of my house." He repaid Lorenzo's affection tenfold by his devotion to his daughter Maddalena, whom he accompanied to Rome when she married Francesco Cibo. Even Lorenzo's wife Clarice, always ill at ease among her husband's brilliant friends and at first

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

I am as a dead man laden with bricks, with a head like a big onion on an arid heap of cappelline,<sup>1</sup> I seem to be all east wind. With trembling voice and hands I write, Signor mine, because the sacristan of Or San Michele has just come to my bedside to tell me that the priest of my little church, which Your Magnificence promised me, is dead; it is at Empoli and worth twelve or fifteen florins a month, and there are no duties. Now being vacant, Lorenzo my life and hope, I throw myself into your arms. I know not what to say. I have but my own mother-wit and my tongue. Do not judge of me for the love of God by my writing, but by my affection, my need, and the straits in which I find myself. I commend myself to you as heartily as I can and will not again molest you. No more, in haste, I am sweating as though I were harnessed to a waggon. God keep you in health and prosperity, and inspire you to do what is best for the salvation of my soul.—April 1, 1474.

YOUR MATTEO FRANCO.

Not most faithful servant, for as yet there is nothing in which I can be faithful.<sup>2</sup>

### GIULIANO DE' MEDICI *from Pisa to his mother* LUCREZIA

THE LADY LUCRETIA DE MEDICI MOST DEAR TO ME,—So that you should know something about us since our departure we send you word that, thanks be to God, we have arrived safely, and are all very well. We are in the midst of a thousand fine doings here, of which you shall hear more by word of mouth

suspicious of Matteo's tongue, soon discovered his many excellent qualities, and he became her treasurer, her almoner, and at length her attorney. He taught all Lorenzo's children to read, and in one of his sonnets feelingly describes the trouble they gave him. Until lately it was supposed that Luigi Pulci and Matteo Franco were really friends, and only wrote the ferocious and biting sonnets which amused all Florence to each other to amuse Lorenzo, but Signor Volpi proves, I think, that their animosity was real and that Matteo often had the best in the war of words.

<sup>1</sup> Vermicelli.

<sup>2</sup> *Un Cortigiano di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, G. Volpi, *Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana*, xvii. fasc. 50–51.

## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

when we return. Yesterday we had dinner with our rector, which was magnificent, and he played the pedant. To-day is the ball, and to-morrow I shall go my own way, for there is much to see; it is a beautiful place. Till now we have not had a moment without entertainments, which are given in our honour.

We have no more to say; if you want anything from here let us know.—Pisa, May 16, 1474.<sup>1</sup> JUL. MED.

### BERTOLDO DI GIOVANNI to LORENZO DE' MEDICI

MAGNIFICENT LORENZO, &c.,—This moment I have thrown away burin, chisel, compasses, square, wax, modelling tools, architecture, perspective, have given four kicks to that bull, and have sent back the clay to the potter, because hideous pots had been made for me, and because I perceive that the peppered dishes of our knight of Prato, Messer Luca Calvanese, are more esteemed by Count Girolamo than all other talents, sciences, or arts, they having obtained for him knighthood. Now the art of cooking is not inborn in Luca, but has been obtained by him in a piggish way solely out of my book, and I believe the cleanest dish he ever prepared was at Monte Guffoni, when he gave you two plates full of beccafichi<sup>2</sup> cooked by hand. So I have determined to abandon all other arts and to take to cooking, and therefore pray Your Magnificence to recommend me to the head steward, who is over the cooks, in order that I may get back my book. I hope that in a short time Messer Luca of the Pepper will not be able to hold a sieve. I would to God I had been brought up under Cibacca<sup>3</sup> instead of under Donatello, for seeing how times go, before I had made two giacomini<sup>4</sup> or two jellies, the Count would have created me Prior of Pisa. And I say if they make him head

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza xxx. No. 394.

<sup>2</sup> *Sylvia hortensis* or garden warbler.

<sup>3</sup> A famous cook.

<sup>4</sup> A sweet dish.

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

of the giants, or of something else which had better not be mentioned, you are the better judge, I being a pupil of Donato. But above all, before Messer Luca has taken possession of it, I beg you to get me back my cookery book. Once I have it in my hands trust me to put him, his pepper-pot, his wantons and his title, into a pie covered with pepper, without passing them through a sieve, and then I will make so many pills of it. May God send all that court to the devil. I pray Him that I may see the Pope, the Count, and Messer Luca suffocated in a vat full of pepper, and you, beware of their treachery. From the castle of S. Anthony in the Wilderness.—[No date.] From your servant  
BERTOLDO.<sup>1</sup>

In 1475 everything was peaceful in Italy. Lorenzo was able to give his attention to the reconstruction of the University of Pisa, in which town he spent some months, to devote himself to poetry and philosophy, and often to indulge in his love of outdoor sports. Niccolò Roberti, Duke Borso d'Este's ambassador to Florence, wrote to his master in January :

MOST ILLUSTRIOUS LORD,—There is no news to send save that near Pisa, where Lorenzo is enjoying much sport with the King's [Ferrante of Naples] hawkers, two of the falcons sent to him by H.M. have been lost, and they are the two best. Your Excellency must not wonder at my sending such news, because here little else is talked about. Idleness is so universal in Italy that if things do not change there will be more to write of battles between birds and dogs than of armies and gallant deeds.—January 22, 1474 (1475).

In this same year was held Giuliano de' Medici's magnificent and costly tournament, which would however be forgotten

<sup>1</sup> *Michelangelo Buonarroti, Quellen und Forschungen zu seiner Geschichte und Kunst*, Karl Frey, i. 77. Berlin, 1907. Bertoldo di Giovanni was born between 1410-1420, and two days after his death Bartolommeo Dati wrote: "Bertoldo, an admirable sculptor and medallist, who made many fine works and was always with the Magnificent Lorenzo, has died after two days' illness at Poggio a Caiano (December 28, 1491). He is a great loss and much regretted by Lorenzo, for in all Tuscany and perhaps in all Italy there is none other of such talent and worth."



## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

had not Poliziano written his immortal *Stanze per la Giostra del Magnifico Giuliano di Piero de' Medici*, "a masterpiece," writes Symonds, "which blent the ancient and the modern world in a work of art glowing with Italian fancy. . . . Each stanza of *La Giostra* is a mimic world of beauty, art, and scholarship; a painting where the object stands before us modelled with relief of light and shade in finely modulated lines. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

### AGNOLO POLIZIANO at Pisa to CLARICE DE' MEDICI

*Magnifica Domina mea*,—I did not write yesterday to Your Magnificence because Lorenzo sent me to Lucca. I have just come back and take up my pen to keep faith with you. Lorenzo is well and in good spirits. Yesterday as there was but little wind he went hawking; but they had not much luck because the young falcon belonging to Pilato, called the Mantuan, was lost. This morning they went out again, but the wind was not favourable, nevertheless we saw some fine flights, and Maestro Giorgio flew his Peregrine falcon which came back to the lure most obediently.<sup>2</sup> Lorenzo is quite in love with it. Of a truth he is not wrong, for Maestro Giorgio says he never saw a handsomer or a better, and declares he will make of him the finest falcon in the world. While we were in the fields Pilato came back from the river with his lost falcon, so Lorenzo was doubly pleased. If I knew what to write I should be glad: but I can only give you news of his hawking as we do nought else in the fore- and the afternoon. This evening I hear that on Monday Lorenzo intends to hunt roe deer and then to return at once to Florence. Please God we may find you well and with a boy in your arms.<sup>3</sup> I commend myself to Your Magnificence.—In Pisa, December 1, 1475.

<sup>1</sup> *Renaissance in Italy*, J. A. Symonds, iv. 354. Smith, Elder & Co., 1898.

<sup>2</sup> An instrument used in falconry, made of leather and feathers in the shape of a wing.

<sup>3</sup> Giovanni (afterwards Pope Leo X.) was born on the 11th December.



## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

Make my excuses to Madonna Lucrezia if I have not written to her, but I have nought to say save what I write to you. Commend me to her. Your servant,

AGNOLO DA MONTEPULCIANO.<sup>1</sup>

### AGNOLO POLIZIANO to CLARICE DE' MEDICI

*Magnifica Domina mea*,—Yesterday after leaving Florence we came as far as San Miniato [al Tedesco], singing all the way, and occasionally talking of holy things so as not to forget Lent. At Lastra [a Signa] we drank *zappolino*, which tasted much better than I had been told. Lorenzo is brilliant and makes the whole company gay: yesterday I counted twenty six horses of those who are with him. When we reached San Miniato yester evening we began to read a little of S. Augustine, then the reading resolved itself into music, and looking at and instructing a certain well-known dancer who is here. Lorenzo is just going to Mass. I will finish another time.—At San Miniato, April 8 (1476). Servitor.

YOUR AGNOLO.<sup>2</sup>

### CLARICE DE' MEDICI to her husband LORENZO at Florence

By the bearer we send you seventeen partridges which your falconers took to-day. I should have been glad had you come to enjoy them with us; we have expected you until the third hour [an hour before sunset] for the last three evenings. I was astonished you did not come and fear something extraordinary must have happened to keep you. I beg that if it is so you will let me know, for surely it is in any case better we should be together than one in France and the other in Lombardy. I expect you at all events to-morrow and pray if it is

<sup>1</sup> *Prose Volgari inedite*, &c., di Angelo Ambrogini Poliziano, Isidoro Del Lungo. Barbera, Firenze, 1867.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*

## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

possible that we should not await you in vain. The children are well and so are all the rest of the family. I commend myself to you, and beg you to come and to bring Madonna Lucrezia.—Cafaggiuolo, August 20, 1476.

LUCREZIA DE' MEDICI, *from Bagno a Morba,*  
*to her son LORENZO*

By the grace of God we have arrived safely and well at Bagno a Morba, I trust He will keep you the same. Of the riding horses we have kept here the ambling palfrey and the chestnut as best suited to this place. So have patience if we have not sent back the palfrey as you desired: none of the others stood the journey well, and it seemed best to me to keep these so that should anything happen we should not be forced to go afoot. But if you want him, tell me, and send us another horse instead. They shall be well looked after here. Of the honours paid us and the amusing things that have happened you shall hear in my next, as the bearer of this has one foot in the stirrup. To begin with, the rooms are like those of an alchemist [*i.e.* small, dark, and hot] and the bugs are as big as capons. Lionardo and Sano can testify to this, they were the first to begin the hunt. *Valete.* In haste.—On the 10th day of May 1477.

L. DE MEDICIS, at Bagno a Morba.<sup>1</sup>

This letter was dictated to some secretary, and the handwriting is plain enough. Whenever Lucrezia dictates evidently the writer did not think it respectful to use *thou*, which she always uses when writing with her own hand.

LUCREZIA DE' MEDICI, *from Bagno a Morba,*  
*to her son LORENZO at Pisa*

*Salutem, &c.* I send you sixteen flasks of good old Greek wine: eight of Poggibonsi, marked with ink: and eight of

<sup>1</sup> *Del Bagno a Morba, Ricordi Storici e Letterari, Luigi Righetti. Roma,*

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

Colle. To us they seem good, you must however choose, and four *torte besse* (cakes made at Siena). I do this because I think that with the arrival of the Madama<sup>1</sup> you may need them, although I doubt not you have made every provision. Yet as I had these and they seemed to me good I send them, for I think they may please you. Do not let the carrier return here empty. Oranges, biscuits, and *marino*<sup>2</sup> would be met with banners flying. No more at present. I am well and hope for good results from the baths. God be thanked, may He keep you well. In haste.—On the 23rd day of May 1477.

YOUR LUCREZIA DE' MEDICI  
at Bagno a Morba.<sup>3</sup>

LUCREZIA DE' MEDICI (*Lorenzo's daughter, born 1470*)  
*to her grandmother LUCREZIA at Bagno a Morba*

MAGNIFICENT GRANDMOTHER MINE,—Let me know how you are and when you began your baths. It seems to me a thousand years since you left, and every day I say a Pater noster and an Ave Maria for your return well and happy. Send me that basket of roses you promised. We are all well here, all we children with Mona Clarice. Mona Bartolomea and all her family are here too, tell Leonardo that they are well and commend me to him. We often go up to your little spring, and there we talk of you. Lorenzo has gone to Pisa, may God accompany him, he will come back to us soon.

I pray you to be careful and of good cheer for love of me, so that you may return well and bright, it seems a thousand

<sup>1</sup> The Duchess of Ferrara, wife of Ercole, Duke of Ferrara, and daughter of Ferrante I., King of Naples. She passed through Pisa on her way to Naples to attend her father's marriage with Giovanna d'Aragona.

<sup>2</sup> The meaning of this word is obscure. Some suggest that it is a kind of fish, others that it is the name of a wine. I think Lucrezia jokingly asked her son to send her some cool sea-wind. The peasants still call the west wind which blows from the sea *marino*.

<sup>3</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza xxxiv. No. 133.

## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

years to me. If I can do aught for you here, command me.—  
Written on May 24, 1477. No more. May Christ guard  
you.

YOUR LUCREZIA DE' MEDICI, Careggi.<sup>1</sup>

### AGNOLO POLIZIANO to LUCREZIA DE' MEDICI at Bagno a Morba

*Magnifica Domina mea honoranda*,—The family are all well. Lorenzo has informed us of the honours paid to Madama of Ferrara at Pisa, so I do not repeat what no doubt you have heard from others. She left evidently well pleased.

There is again talk about the affairs at Milan and the Lord Ruberto [Count of San Severino]. You will have heard how he went to Milan with Messer Obietto, and it appears the Illustrious Madonna Duchess heard of some understanding between them. Donato del Conte, who was also in the secret, was sent for and imprisoned. Upon which it seems the Lord Ruberto took arms with his followers and attempted to raise the city together with some of the Duke's brothers. Then seeing there was no hope he fled, and with him went Messer Obietto, who they say to-day has been taken; of the Lord Ruberto there is as yet no news. The Duke's brothers have implored the Duchess to forgive them, alleging as an excuse that they feared for their lives. The Lord Ottaviano is reported to have been drowned while flying from his pursuers. There is also the affair of Messer Antonio Ridofo, who was attacked by some soldiers of Pietra Santa and Melia on his way from the Riviera of Genoa. After a skirmish of several miles his mounted crossbow-men showed good fight and wounded and killed those soldiers with great honour to themselves, and Messer Antonio arrived here safe and sound.

Your Piero and Lucrezia and the other children are well

<sup>1</sup> *Affetti di Famiglia nel Quattrocento*, Guglielmo Volpi, Vita Nuova, No. 503.

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

and commend themselves to Your Magnificence. I have not been able to write to you because I am at Careggi, and therefore have no means of sending letters. Madonna Clarice, Bianca and Nannina, and all our people are well. I commend myself to Your Magnificence.—Florence, the last day of May 1477. Your Magnificence's servant,

ANGELUS POL.<sup>1</sup>

LUCREZIA DE' MEDICI, *from Bagno a Morba, to  
her son LORENZO*

*Salvus sis, mi suavissime filii*,—To-day I have received a letter in thy name which has caused me much rejoicing, particularly as thou sayest thou art well and also the others. I am delighted to hear of the marriage arranged between Cosimino Rucellai<sup>2</sup> and the daughter of the Marquess Gabrielle. Quite an unexpected piece of news. Coming from so good a source it must be good; and having been settled by so excellent a person, excellent. We are celebrating it with great rejoicings, and so are all the people of the Bagni. To so fortunate and good a beginning may God grant a joyous and happy ending, *et suffit*. By the grace of God I am well and have nearly finished my baths. I have decided, if it pleases God, to leave this on the 21st, that is Saturday week, and to stay the night with Madonna Tita, widow of Messer Antonio Cortesi, at San Gemignano. She has been with me here for several days and entreated me to do this; then she sent her son, who left this morning, to settle about the visit. So because of her entreaties, and because she is a widow, I have been forced to promise without awaiting thy assent. We shall go quietly and stay little, and on Monday the eve of S. John [23rd June] we shall be at home. I do not see my way to come before, as I am still weak from the effects of the

<sup>1</sup> *Prose Volgari, &c., op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Son of her daughter Nannina, wife of Bernardo Rucellai.



## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

baths. But should any necessity arise for me to come sooner, let me know and I will leave all. Send the horses, if it suits thee, to arrive here on the 19th, so that they can rest on the 20th, and as I have said, we start early on the 21st. Seven horses must be sent, nought else is wanted. May Christ keep you all. I commend myself to thee.—In haste on the 8th day of June 1477.

THY LUCREZIA.

I have given orders to Maso of Fiesole for the donkeys and mules he is to send.<sup>1</sup>

LUCREZIA DE' MEDICI to her son LORENZO, from  
*Bagno a Morba*

*Karissime filii salutem, &c.*,—To-day the 18th the horses have arrived, two days before the time; I suppose by the over-zeal of whoever was charged to send them. It does not matter, although there is a dearth of stabling, straw, and oats, but we have sent them where they will be well cared for and fed until we leave as I said on the 21st. I cannot leave before as I am very weak and have not yet finished my baths. But to keep my word and be with thee on S. John's day I shall leave, although if I remained another eight days it would be more necessary than superfluous. However now it is settled. We shall not be at Florence before Monday for the reasons already given. So that if thou hast sent the horses before the time fixed in order that I might be home earlier, forgive me: if I had received a letter from thee urging me to return I should have left at once without considering my own convenience and well-being. Nought else. I commend myself to thee and pray God to keep thee well and happy. Salute the family and tell them I shall be at home on the vigil of S. John, if it pleases God, for I never expected to live so long. In haste, in haste, on the 18th day [of June] 1477.

THY LUCREZIA at Bagno a Morba.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Del Bagno a Morba*, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



# LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

PIERO MALEGONNELLE (*Vicar of Pomerance*) to  
LUCREZIA DE' MEDICI

HONOURED AS A MOTHER,—Being here at Bagno a Morba, and hearing that what I always desired has been accomplished,<sup>1</sup> it is only my duty to congratulate you, not so much because of your satisfaction, as for the good of what otherwise would never have risen again to its ancient reputation. May God be pleased to give you grace to enjoy it for a long, long time. There is the same quantity of water in the baths as before, but with the new cistern we have made there will be more and of a better quality, as Riccio, the bearer of this letter, can fully explain when he sees you. Riccio and his brother understand such works, as you know. I recommend them to you most heartily in case you need their services here.

As the one necessary thing is to try and conduct as much water as possible to the baths, having to remain near here this winter, which I take to be the best time for searching for the springs, if you send an efficient and able man I offer, as is my bounden duty, to aid him in every way. It only remains for me to place myself at your disposal and to commend myself to you. May the Almighty keep you in health and happiness.—Bagno a Morba, on the 16th day of September 1477. Your servant,

PIERO MALEGONNELLE.<sup>2</sup>

PIERO MALEGONNELLE (*Vicar of Pomerance*) to  
LUCREZIA DE' MEDICI

MOST HONOURED AS A MOTHER,—As I shall leave at the end of my service here and am expecting my successor from day to day, I have not written about the baths. I went there last Friday and found the water had increased rather than dimin-

<sup>1</sup> Lucrezia de' Medici had just bought Bagno a Morba from the Commune of Florence.

<sup>2</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza lxxxv. No. 203.

## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

ished, and that it was extremely hot. The trench is finished from where the water rises under the building as far as the baths which have been rebuilt, and are twelve in number. The cistern is also finished, except covering in the roof, according to the designs sent; and as far as my poor judgment goes all seems to me well done, saving that the water will enter the cistern at only one place and then will have to flow  $12\frac{3}{4}$  yards, so that I fear the baths will be too hot to be borne where the water enters and not hot enough at the other end. I think the water ought to be brought into the cistern by two conduits. This might still be easily arranged by dividing the channel in two when it reaches the room where the shower baths are, and digging another trench 19 yards long  $2\frac{3}{4}$  yards further in. This can always be done if necessary. There has been some difficulty in the work, as just under the hill where the water comes out they have been obliged to underpin the ground and then to cut through the rock from whence the water comes. But the rock is hard and 3 yards 30 inches thick, and a channel 2 feet long has to be cut in order that the water may have sufficient fall to flow under the small palace to the baths. In two or three days I think it will be finished. The lime has been burnt and they say it is good, about eighty bushels for twenty soldi; and in the fields opposite the trench they have found earth fit for making tiles and bricks. The levellers are at work making them and a Lombard has undertaken to bake them, so they will cost four lire or less the thousand. They are now in the kiln and this will be a great saving to you. The room for the shower baths,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  yards wide and  $12\frac{3}{4}$  yards long, is partly finished, and the bath at the side also. They say they need certain slabs which are made on purpose for shower baths, and they want them at once. Riccio has been dismissed from the inn and Giovanni di Pace has taken it and says that he has orders for rooms from Volterra, Florence, and elsewhere, and that in addition to what he has he needs all the things noted in the enclosed list. The orchard has been

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

planted in a way that will please you when you see it. I say no more but commend myself to you and may God preserve you in happiness. Ex Castro di Pomarancii, March 25, 1748.

PETRUS DE MALEGONNELLIS, *Vicarius, &c.*<sup>1</sup>

The following letters from Louis XI., from Lorenzo, and from Sixtus IV., relate to the famous Pazzi conspiracy when Giuliano de' Medici was murdered and Lorenzo wounded in the cathedral of Florence. Antagonism and rivalry had for some time existed between the two great families, although Lorenzo's favourite sister Bianca was married to Guglielmo de' Pazzi, who had been regarded by Piero almost as his own son, and is often mentioned in these letters as the companion of the Magnificent on hunting excursions and visits to foreign courts. Guglielmo's brother Francesco, head of the Pazzi bank at Rome, worked incessantly against Lorenzo's uncle Giovanni Tornabuoni, manager of the Roman branch of the Medici bank, and eventually succeeded in depriving him of the business of the Holy See given to Lorenzo in the first days of Sixtus' rule. The third brother, Giovanni de' Pazzi, was married to Beatrice Borromeo, who on the death of her father without having made a will claimed, according to the existing laws, the whole of his property. His nephews, however, intimate friends of the two young Medici, contested her right, and in 1476 a retrospective law of intestacy was passed setting aside the claims of females to the estate of a father who died intestate, and giving it to the nearest male relative. Machiavelli, Nardi, and Guicciardini, all accuse Lorenzo of instigating the drafting of "this law made for the occasion," as Nardi calls it. Roscoe maintains that it was passed more than ten years before, but the proofs he adduces are quite illusory. Without extraneous aid it is however very improbable that the Pazzi would have dared to attempt the assassination of the two brothers Medici. This aid they obtained from the Pope. Sixtus IV. had, as Dr. Creighton says, "elevated nepotism into political principle . . . he took his nephews, men of no position and little capacity, and placed at their disposal all the resources of the Roman See." Giuliano della Rovere and Piero Riario were created cardinals in total disregard of the regulations of the Conclave,

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza xxxiv. No. 312.

## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

while for Piero's brother, Girolamo, he bought Imola from the Duke of Milan, at the same time arranging a marriage between him and Caterina Sforza, the Duke's illegitimate daughter. Florence had long coveted Imola, and Lorenzo tried to prevent the purchase by raising difficulties about advancing the necessary money to the Pope. Francesco de' Pazzi then seized his opportunity and was appointed Treasurer to the Holy See in Lorenzo's place.

Another grievance Sixtus had against Florence was the indirect aid given to Niccolò Vitelli, who had taken the side of Todi and Spoleto when they rose against the Pope, by despatching troops to Borgo San Sepolcro when the Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere laid siege to Città di Castello. The appointment of the anti-Medicean Francesco Salviati, as Archbishop of Pisa in the place of the late Filippo de' Medici, in spite of a previous promise that no archbishop or bishop should be appointed within Florentine territory save by the consent of the Signory of Florence, was deeply resented by Lorenzo. Though unable to prevent the nomination he succeeded in keeping Salviati out of his archbishopric and consequently without his emoluments for three years. In 1477 the Pope's anger against Lorenzo rose to fever-heat. He suspected, unjustly as it appears, that Florence had aided Carlo Fortebraccio in his endeavour to seize Perugia. The attempt failed and Fortebraccio overran the territory of Siena, which at once appealed to the Pope and the King of Naples, at the same time arrogantly summoning Florence to immediately recall the condottiere. Fortebraccio was in Venetian service, so the Florentines answered that they had nothing to do with him and only wished he would keep quiet.

The murder of Galeazzo Sforza, Duke of Milan, had further complicated matters. Girolamo Riario was astute enough to realise that if the Pope died, the change of government in Milan might expose him to the resentment of Florence, and determined to try and overthrow the Medici. Francesco de' Pazzi and Archbishop Salviati were easily persuaded to join, but shrewd old Jacopo de' Pazzi, who lived in Florence and knew the hold the Medici had over the people, gave them no encouragement. Promises of foreign aid and the assurance of the assent of the Pope however at last won him over. An Abruzzese, Giovan Battista da Montesecco, a captain in the

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service of Girolamo Riario, was selected as a man to be trusted ; his confession<sup>1</sup> is curious reading but too long to give *in extenso*. When he met Francesco de' Pazzi in the Archbishop Salviati's house at Rome he expressed grave doubts. "Have a care, gentlemen, what you are undertaking. Florence is no small matter, and Lorenzo, I hear, is very popular." The Archbishop answered that they knew better how it stood with Lorenzo, that it was their affair and he was only the instrument. Montesecco then asked what the Pope would say, and was assured he hated Lorenzo and would follow their advice. Moreover he would receive the captain. Plans were then discussed. It was arranged that troops were to be held in readiness by Giovanni Francesco da Tolentino from Imola, Lorenzo Giustini from Città di Castello, and Napoleone Orsini from Todi and Perugia, to enter Florence as soon as the assassins had done their work. Soon afterwards Montesecco was summoned to the Vatican. "I will have no bloodshed," said the Pope, "it is not consistent with my office to cause the death of any man. Lorenzo has behaved shamefully and iniquitously towards us, but I do not desire his death, though I do desire a change of government." Girolamo Riario promised that everything should be done to prevent bloodshed, but asked the Pope to pardon any man who was forced to commit murder. "Thou art a stupid fool," answered the Pope. "I tell thee I will have no man killed, but I desire the government to be changed. To you, Giovan Battista, I repeat that I wish the government of Florence to be changed and Lorenzo to be overthrown, for he is an undutiful and a bad man who defies us. When he is out of the way we can deal as we choose with the Republic which will be most convenient to us." Riario and the Archbishop agreed to this and added, "Then Your Holiness is content that we should take every means to bring this about?" Sixtus repeated, "Again I say I am not. Go and do what you will, as long as no blood is shed." As they left Salviati turned to the Pope, "Holy Father, are you content that we steer this boat. We will guide it well." The Pope answered, "I am. But see to it that the honour of the Holy See and of the Count does not suffer."

The Archbishop now went to Pisa, and Francesco de' Pazzi to Florence. Knowing the hospitable nature of Lorenzo, he

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, op. cit. ii. p. 168.



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suggested that Raffaello Sansoni, a nephew of Girolamo Riario (whose name he adopted), who had just been created Cardinal of S. Giorgio at the age of seventeen and was studying at Pisa, should come to the Pazzi villa near Florence. As he expected, the lad was at once invited to supper at the Medicean villa at Fiesole, and the conspirators were jubilant. But Giuliano was ill and did not come, so they were foiled. The young Cardinal, simply an instrument in the hands of the Pazzi and the Archbishop, then expressed a desire to see the Medici palace in town, and proposed the Sunday before Ascension day (26th April), when he was to celebrate High Mass in the cathedral. Lorenzo asked him to dine afterwards, and it was arranged that the two Medici brothers were to be killed as they rose from table. It is singular that no rumour of the plot had got abroad, as so many were cognisant of it. Besides Jacopo and Francesco de' Pazzi, the Archbishop and Montesecco, there was Jacopo Salviati, the Archbishop's brother, and his cousin another Jacopo, Bernardo Bandini, a dissipated adventurer, and Jacopo Bracciolini, son of Poggio Bracciolini the humanist, who owed much to the Medici. Jacopo was deeply in debt and inordinately vain. Two priests, destined to play a prominent part, were also implicated, Antonio Maffei of Volterra, an Apostolic scribe, and Stefano da Bagnone, chaplain to Jacopo de' Pazzi. Montesecco had hired a band of Perugian exiles, and the Archbishop had a large retinue; these were to aid in seizing the Palazzo de' Signori. At the last moment Giuliano sent word that he was not well enough to dine, but would attend Mass. The conspirators then determined that the deed must be done in the cathedral, as on that evening Tolentino and Giustini would be drawing near to Florence with their troops. Francesco de' Pazzi and Bernardo Bandini undertook to kill Giuliano, Lorenzo was entrusted to the abler hands of Montesecco. No doubt all would have gone as they had planned but for the scruples of the soldier, who absolutely refused to commit a murder "where God would see him." The two priests, who had no such feeling, offered themselves as substitutes—and failed.

Lorenzo accompanied the Cardinal and the Archbishop, who had come to Florence on the pretext of seeing his invalid mother, to the cathedral. Suddenly the conspirators saw that Giuliano had not come. Francesco de' Pazzi and Bernardo



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Bandini ran across the square and persuaded him to go with them, affectionately clasping their arms round him to feel whether he wore a shirt of mail.

The scene in the cathedral is best described in the words of Filippo Strozzi, who was present : " At the words *missa est* Ser Stefano da Bagnone, secretary of Messer Jacopo de' Pazzi and Messer Antonio Maffei of Volterra assailed Lorenzo de' Medici, while Francesco de' Pazzi and Bernardo Bandini fell upon Giuliano. Both were walking round the choir outside, and Lorenzo at once understood, drew his sword, leaped into the choir, rushed across in front of the altar, entered the new sacristy and ordered the door to be locked. There he remained until aid came from his house. He was only wounded in the neck, and in a few days was well. Francesco de Pazzi and Bernardo Bandini sprang at Giuliano, who was walking in front of the chapel of the Cross, and with ten or twelve blows laid him dead on the pavement ; they also killed Francesco Nori, who was with him. The uproar was great in the church. I was there talking with Messer Bongianni and the other gentlemen, and we were all struck with astonishment, people flying now here, now there, while the church resounded with loud shouts, and arms were seen in the hands of partisans of the Pazzi who had joined in this matter. The Cardinal was left all alone by the side of the altar, until some priests came and led him into the old sacristy, where he remained until two of the Eight with many soldiers arrived and took him to the Palace. At the time this was happening the Archbishop of Pisa, under the pretence of paying a visit to the Signory, was at the Palace, and hearing the tumult in the city, he tried to seize it. With him was his brother Jacopo and Jacopo his cousin, Jacopo Poggio, the Perugians, and others. But the Signory and their guard defended themselves and sounded the tocsin, and the citizens rushed armed into the piazza, and forced a way into the Palace, the door of which had been closed on the inside, and all were made prisoners."

Poliziano describes the agony of suspense of the small group in the new sacristy, who thought the church was in the hands of the Pazzi. "Some feared that the priest's dagger was poisoned, and Lorenzo's friend, Antonio Ridolfi, a most excellent youth, sucked the wound in his neck. Lorenzo, however, gave no heed to it, continually repeating, 'Is Giuliano safe?'

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Then came sharp knocks at the door. 'We are friends, we are relations. Let Lorenzo come out ere the enemy gains a foothold.' We were undecided, and shouted, 'Enemies or friends? Is Giuliano safe?' No answer was given. Then Sigismondo Della Stufa, devoted to Lorenzo since his boyhood, climbed up the ladders into the organ loft, looked down into the church, and saw the dead body of Giuliano. He recognised those below as friends, and shouted to us to open the door. Closing around Lorenzo we led him, so that he should not come past the dead body, to his house."

How the Archbishop of Pisa, the Pazzi, and Jacopo Bracciolini were hung from the windows of the Palace of the Signoria, and how the people hunted their adherents through the streets, shouting, "*Palle! Palle! down with the traitors* and cut them to pieces," is a matter of history. Montesecco lay in hiding for some days, and before he was beheaded in the Palazzo del Podestà, dictated and signed the confession which throws full light on the participation of Sixtus IV. and his nephew Girolamo Riario in the plot.

On Ascension Day Giuliano was buried in S. Lorenzo, amid the grief of the people whose darling he was. "He was tall," writes Poliziano, "broad-shouldered, wide-chested, with well-developed and strong arms, a small waist, powerful thighs, and well-made legs; black, sparkling eyes, a dark complexion, with thick black hair falling on to his shoulders. A fine rider, jousting, and dancer, an excellent wrestler and runner, passionately devoted to the chase, submitting patiently to want of sleep, to hunger, and to thirst, which he often endured for a whole day. Magnanimous, steady, pious, and without vice, he delighted in music, painting, and everything connected with art. He liked poetry, and wrote some good verse in the vulgar tongue. He spoke well, but was reserved and not quick-witted; yet he enjoyed a good joke, and sometimes made one. Liars he hated and those who nursed vengeance. In dress he was not extravagant, but always neat and well-clothed. Serious, handsome, and dignified, he was most courteous and kind-hearted. He adored and revered his brother, while his courage and high spirits endeared him to the people."

Vasari tells in his Life of Verrocchio of three waxen images of Lorenzo, the size of life, made by order of his friends and relations to commemorate his escape from the dagger of the

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assassin by Arsino, a celebrated worker in wax, with the help and after the designs of Verrocchio. "The skeleton inside was of wood, as has been said elsewhere, with a framework of split canes covered with waxed cloth in handsome folds, so well arranged that nothing better or more lifelike can be imagined. The heads, hands, and feet were made of thicker wax, hollow inside and copied from life, painted in oils, and ornamented with hair and other necessary things, so natural and so well made, that they seemed living men and not waxen images, as can be seen in any of these three. One of them is in the church of the nuns of Chiarito in Via S. Gallo in front of the miraculous crucifix. This figure is clothed in the very dress Lorenzo wore when, with his neck bandaged, he showed himself at the window of his house to the people, who had rushed there to see whether he was alive, as they hoped, or to avenge him if dead. The second figure of Lorenzo is clothed in the *lucco*, the ordinary dress of the Florentines, and is in the church of the Servites of the Annunziata above the smaller door, beside which is the table where candles are sold. The third was sent to S. Maria degl' Angeli at Assisi and placed in front of the Madonna, where, as has been already said, Lorenzo de' Medici caused the road which goes from S. Maria to the gate of Assisi and leads to S. Francesco to be laid down in bricks, and at the same time restored the fountains built by his grandfather Cosimo at the same place."<sup>1</sup>

### LOUIS XI., *King of France*, to the FLORENTINE REPUBLIC

BELOVED AND GREAT FRIENDS,—We have just heard of the great and inhuman outrage, opprobrium and injury, which not long ago has been committed against your Seigneury, against the persons of our most dear and beloved cousins Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici, their friends, relations, servants, and adherents, by those of the Pazzi Bank and their dependants; and of the death of our said cousin Giuliano de' Medici, whereby we have been and are as much grieved as though it

<sup>1</sup> *Le Vite de' piu eccellenti Pittori*, &c., Giorgio Vasari, iii. 374. Sansoni, Firenze, 1878.

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had happened to ourselves. Now as your honour and our own has been so gravely offended, and as the Medici are our relations and allies, and as we regard this outrage and the death of our cousin Giuliano as though it had happened to our own person, and therefore consider the Pazzi guilty of *læsæ Majestatis*, we cannot permit this deed to go unpunished; we desire with all our heart that adequate punishment should follow as an example to others. We have therefore decided to send to your Excellencies our well-beloved and faithful Councillor and Chamberlain, Messire d'Argenton,<sup>1</sup> Seneschal of our province of Poitou, who is one of the men in whom we have the utmost confidence, to inform you at length of our wishes; he will tell you more about this matter. We beg you to place the same trust in him and the same belief in his words as you would in ours, it is for this that we send him. I pray God, beloved and great friends, to keep and to guard you.—12th May 1478.<sup>2</sup>

### LOUIS XI. to POPE SIXTUS IV.

#### *Copy of our Letter sent to the Pope*

MOST HOLY FATHER,—We have been fully informed that wantonly by the hands of Count Girolamo, of one of your nephews recently promoted to the dignity of the Cardinalate, of the Archbishop of Pisa, and of members of the Pazzi family and their adherents, an outrage, insult, and personal attack has been made on the person of our dear friend Lorenzo de' Medici and on Giuliano his brother. That the said Giuliano and others, his friends, have been killed, murdered, and assassinated in a church in Florence, in which we have been. We are deeply grieved and still more astonished that such an out-

<sup>1</sup> Philippe de Comines, who writes: "I remained about a year in Florence and her territory as the guest of the Florentines, who treated me well, better even on the last day of my visit than on the first."—*Memoires de Messire Philippe de Comines, Seigneur d'Argenton*, i. 395. Brussels, 1723.

<sup>2</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, op. cit. ii. 119.

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rage should have been committed against one of such a House as is that of the Medici; renowned in the whole world, and known as belonging to the Church and filling high offices, such as that of Cardinal and Archbishop, and in the precincts of a Church, a sacred place dedicated to God. Therefore, Holy Father, we are much displeased at so abominable a sin and outrage, which we regard as even more grave than if it had been done to our own person, or to the person of one nearly related to us, and we hold that your and our honour has been most deeply offended. On account of the special love we have always borne, and bear, to the said Lorenzo our cousin and to all of his House, and of the great friendship, cemented by loyalty, oaths, and alliance, which in past times existed, and exists at present, between our predecessors, ourselves, and the city of Florence, we most affectionately supplicate and pray Your Holiness that for love of us as well as for love of our Holy Mother Church, in order that others should not go unpunished, amends shall be made for this crime by punishing the delinquents, and all who have aided and participated, in such way that it may be an example for all men to remember, and that greater ills shall not arise. Otherwise, by virtue of the said alliance and confederation existing between us and the said Florentines, and on account of the love we bear to our said cousin, we have determined to declare against all those who are implicated and not to allow this thing to go unpunished. We pray the Blessed Son of God that Your Holiness may long be spared to rule our Holy Mother Church.<sup>1</sup>

LORENZO DE' MEDICI to TOMMASO SODERINI at Milan<sup>2</sup>

I wrote to you on the 8th. Since then I have received yours of the 6th, to which I now reply. I thought it best to

<sup>1</sup> *Congiura de' Pazzi*, narrata in Latino da A. Poliziano volgarizzate con sue note e illustrazioni da Anicio Bonucci, p. 119. Le Monnier, Firenze, 1856.

<sup>2</sup> Lorenzo's uncle by marriage, sent on a special mission to Milan and to Venice.



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send the last by a special courier, because I have heard that the troops of the King [of Naples] and of the Pope intend making a serious attack, so I think it will be necessary to gather a larger force here than we had asked for, as when the enemy comes he will probably come in force. By yours and Orfeo's letters we understand that 1000 men have been engaged and are ready for our service. If this is correct I think it will suffice if one half crosses our frontier, the rest being held in readiness for what I mentioned in my last, the assault of Imola. It must be remembered that in defending ourselves we are defending those Illustrious Lords [of Milan], and if we gain anything for ourselves it will be most unexpected, for these Venetian ambassadors declare that if peace is not made with the Turk we can hope for but small aid from them. In ten or twelve days we shall have 450 men under arms. If there is a chance of engaging any condottieri it would be an excellent thing. I think I am sure of Signor Costanzo and do not believe he will fail me. Those Illustrious Lords have written to their ambassador here that they will only subscribe 8000 ducats towards the pay of the Romagna troop. It seems to me they do wrong to state a given sum, as this might put off the Venetians, if they say they will subscribe one third for this troop it can afterwards be settled between ourselves that we should pay whatever sum is needful beyond the 8000 ducats. Those Illustrious Lords also seem not to wish to engage Signor Costanzo, as I heard yesterday. But the negotiation is so far advanced that not only would it be most unjust to him, but also my motive in hindering him from serving with the enemy must be considered. If he only guards and defends his own territory it seems to me it would be a great advantage to us. In short these gentlemen must be prepared to disburse the above-mentioned sum and the troops must be ready to move as I have said. Above all there must be no delay, as our adversaries are hastening their preparations; if they see that we are strong and able to resist they may change their minds.



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From the Venetians I do not think we shall get other help than those few men on this side of the Po and their contribution towards the pay of the Romagna troop, which they appear to give willingly.

Letters from Rome show that although the Pope knows that Cardinal Riario has been set at liberty, he shows no disposition to raise the excommunication or the interdict.<sup>1</sup> This is a bad sign and makes one believe that he will do all in his power to injure us. We shall see what will happen and are determined to defend ourselves as well as we can.

Girolamo left to-day. He came by way of Pontremoli; I reminded him of your business and he promised me to do all he could. If you pass through Ferrara I need not tell you what to say to the Duke to keep him in the same friendly mood towards us he now displays. I say no more because I know these ambassadors are writing at length.—June 10, 1478.<sup>2</sup>

LORENZO DE' MEDICI to GIOVANNI LANFREDINI,  
*Florentine Ambassador at Venice*

I received yours of the 6th this morning and should have waited for another letter from you with the answer of the Signoria [of Venice], but from various sources I have heard that the forces of the King and the Pope are marching to attack us, and so I write at once in order that you may hasten any aid we can get from Venice. Our ambassador there will I think send our opinion *in scriptis* to the Signoria, who will have to consult with him. We have need of more men than those who

<sup>1</sup> The young Cardinal was set at liberty on June 5th, and went for a few days to the Servite monastery in the SS. Annunziata. From there he wrote to the Pope expressing deep gratitude to the Signoria and to Lorenzo de' Medici for the kind treatment he had received, and bitterly lamented that His Holiness had not acceded to his prayer that the interdict should be taken off. On June 12th he left for Siena, and an old chronicler writes that he was still under the influence of great terror and seemed to feel the rope round his neck. If at the time of the assassination he had not been well guarded the exasperated populace would probably have torn him to pieces.

<sup>2</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza vii. No. 404.

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are on this side of the Po. If the Signoria approve of our plan of attacking Imola in case war is declared against us, we should prefer that the above-mentioned men should be employed there. If they do not approve, then it is imperative that the men be sent with all haste to guard our territory, and we will give orders that they are to be allowed to cross our frontier. We are most anxious about this, not on account of the number of men, but in order to prove to our adversaries that we are united, for they count much on our disunion. Try therefore to settle this one way or the other and reply quickly, for the affair is *in fieri*, and at any moment some impediment might arise. The Signoria of Venice intimated that they did not believe the Pope and the King intend to advance; now I conceive they understand it is true. We have set the Cardinal at liberty, but the Pope has shown no sign of taking off the excommunications or the interdicts; on the contrary he maintains them and encourages troops to attack us. So this is no time for loitering. It would be most harmful to us if their ambassador left here before his successor was appointed. We wish this also to be seen to at once. I will have a copy of the deliberations of the last council sent to you in order that you may press these matters with all the tact demanded by the customs there and by the questions themselves.

I wrote thus far yesterday evening. Afterwards we of the *Pratica* met, and it was decided not to send our opinions *in scriptis*, but to await the reply to those we have sent. More particularly as our opinion is as follows. On all sides we perceive signs of incertitude and hesitation in spite of our solicitations to grant us what they can. If this was cleared up we might hope. If the Venetians will only make a demonstration in our favour, with small cost to themselves they would do us a great service, because, as I have already said, our adversaries believe we are not unanimous in our desire to defend ourselves, and this makes them more enterprising. We thought at least

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that we should receive help which cost little, as for example in the affair of submission [to the Pope], particularly as these ecclesiastical censures still continue, and so that the Signoria must either incur the same interdict if they help us, or break faith with us, which however would be absolved by the Bull of the interdict. As I said before, discover what we can hope for from there, in order that I may not be again deceived. Present these questions skilfully so as not to cause any friction; rather leave a part unsaid, for our great object is to maintain the union of our League in appearance and in reality.

I am writing to our envoy [Tommaso Soderini], who I do not think can have arrived. If he has, lay everything before him.—June 10, 1478.<sup>1</sup>

### LORENZO DE' MEDICI to LOUIS XI., *King of France*

MOST SERENE KING AND ESPECIALLY MY LORD,—The letter Your Majesty has deigned to write about our unhappy case, replete with great love and paternal benevolence, shows me how keenly you felt our misfortune, and how kindly disposed you are towards me. Should I even attempt to return adequate thanks to Your Majesty I should deserve to be called utterly unfit to understand so great a benefit, because words so full of love and benevolence coming from Your Majesty to a humble servant cannot be repaid by any act or word. I can therefore only beg Your Majesty specially to accept my heartfelt declaration of loyalty as a token and a pledge of my gratitude, trusting that God will repay to Your Majesty the rest of my debt. As to Your Majesty's wise counsels to bear this calamity with fortitude, you may rest assured that I do not so much deplore what has happened to myself as the grave affront to the Christian name; because where I hoped, in such bitter trouble, to receive help, I found instead the fountain-head and

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza vii. No. 404.

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instigator of all ill. For he, in the presence of many, dared to confess spontaneously that this crime was caused by him, and promulgated against me, my children, successors, intimates, and well-wishers, an iniquitous sentence of excommunication. Not satisfied with that, he is arming against this Republic, has instigated King Ferdinand against us, and has urged the King's eldest son to march against us with a formidable army in order with violence and arms to destroy him he could not succeed in utterly ruining by deceit and fraud. For I well know, and God is my witness, that I have committed no crime against the Pope, save that I am alive, and having been protected by the grace of Almighty God have not allowed myself to be murdered. This is my sin, for this alone have I been excommunicated and massacred. But I believe that God, scrutiniser of hearts and most just Judge, who knows my innocence, will not permit this and will defend me, whom He saved from those sacrilegious hands in front of His Body, from such unjust calumny. On our side we have Canon Law, on our side laws natural and political, on our side truth and innocence, on our side God and men. He has violated all these at once, and now desires to annihilate us. I write these things to Your Majesty as to a compassionate father, and from you, on account of your goodness, piety, and greatness of soul, I have no doubt I shall receive much help, favour, and military aid, if required. For we cannot believe that any good man can tolerate that he, who wilfully precipitates himself into such an abyss of crime, should drag with him the Christian name. May Your Majesty keep well, to whom I humbly commend myself.—Florence, June 19, 1478.<sup>1</sup>

### LORENZO DE' MEDICI to SFORZA DE' BETTINI

SFORZIE DE BETTINIS,—I wrote to you this morning. Later I received yours of the 28th, with news of the arrival of the

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, op. cit. xi. 131.

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Duke of Calabria and the others at Todi. We wrote at once to all our troops, save to those who are already there, to unite and join those of the Duchess [of Milan] with all speed, part are in the Pisan territory, the others are on the march; to Giovanni Conti [one of the Milanese generals], telling him to advance into the territory of Bologna; to the Venetian contingent to come into that of Faenza. All the others are to march on Todi. We have asked for two hundred additional men-at-arms from Milan besides those that are in readiness, and said that these two hundred are to be placed at once in our pay. With this letter is sent the number of men and the names of the places where they are, so that you can direct them wherever you think best. We have thus done all we can for the moment. You must try and obtain more certain information whether what you have written is true or not. If not, you ought not to lack means to discover the dealings and intentions of the enemy. I think that among them are several who would willingly do us a service. If you can contrive to interview the Cavaliere I think you might learn something. Make every effort, for I cannot believe that you are unable to defend so just a cause.

I understand that the Lord Giovanfrancesco has given orders that the troops he is to send are to be paid, which will be so much more money. I am astonished that the Lord Virginio [Orsini, Clarice's brother] should give them an escort after replying as he did to that trumpeter, however I do not think, as I said this morning, that we need despair. I have no more to add save that you must send us frequent news, and as true news as you can, and use every means to discover as much as possible of the movements and intentions of our adversaries. If this arrival of the Duke of Calabria is true it will probably alter the plans about which we wrote this morning, and we think it will be necessary to concentrate our forces as you suggested. Farewell.—June 25, 1478.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza xliii. No. 175.



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MESSER CECCHO, *from Milan, to* LORENZO DE' MEDICI

*Magnifice tanquam Pater honorande*,—To yours of the 28th of last month in reply to mine of the 22nd, I will only refer by thanking Your Magnificence for accepting my letter in good part.

As to the Lord of Forlì it would seem to me wise to make every effort to draw him to our side for the honour, advantage, and reputation of our League; the said Lord is clever, and I think, as Your Magnificence says, he will attempt to get as much money as he can from the Pope, and then *cum sua justificatione* withdraw: I have lived for many years with these lords of Romagna and know their nature, but one cannot count on this, and we must do all we can to get him on our side.

Monsignore de Chiaromonte (Clermont), ambassador of the King of France,<sup>1</sup> has been here, my Illustrious Masters showed him great honour, and this morning he left: the Illustrious Madonna and we counsellors spoke to him with much openness, and gave him to understand that in favour of that Republic and of Yourself my Illustrious Masters will give all the aid this State can *usque ad vitam*, and we spoke thus as freely as possible, in order that he might understand that this State was *unum velle et unum nolle* with yours. He seemed to me a worthy man, and one to be cultivated; this I advise you to do, and to send to meet him without delay at Bologna, and do what my Masters have written to their ambadassor there and this quickly, so that you may be in time.

It seems to me useless to enlarge on other things, only I beg Your Magnificence to take heed of your person and to be of good cheer, because I think there is every indication that things are going well, and that the Republic, our League, and Your Magnificence, will gain in reputation; on this side we shall leave nothing undone.

<sup>1</sup> Philippe de Comines.



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I beg Your Magnificence not to allow the letters my Illustrious Masters have written, or mine about affairs with the King of France, go into any other hands, but to deliver them there to Monsignore d'Argenton,<sup>1</sup> with the circumspection and prudence that I know Your Magnificence possesses, and thus we shall arrive at obtaining, between my Masters and H.M. the King of France, the essence of what is contained in those letters, which will redound to your honour, reputation, and advantage, because our League being strong and united, and helped by the friendship and reputation of France, things cannot but go well.

Yesterday morning I obtained possession of some letters from France written by one Lancilotto of Macedonia to King Ferrante. We find that King Ferrante has<sup>a</sup> at present four of his people at the French court, this same Lancilotto, Zohan Copula of Salerno, Tommaso Tarquino, who resides there, and a Messer Antonio de Alexandro, only just arrived by the route of Catalonia with instructions and mandates of divers intrigues and plots. I have informed Hieronimo Morelli, ambassador of their excellencies the Signoria [of Florence] of all, so that he may write to Your Magnificence, and I am sure he will have done so. I do not enlarge on this point, because I am sure you will understand and form a better judgment than I can. I entreat of you to keep my letters in your own custody and in that of no other man, for I would on no account that our ambassadors or others should see them for certain reasons, which are legitimate, to avoid rancour, envy, and calumny, &c.—Milan, July 3, 1478.<sup>2</sup>

LORENZO DE' MEDICI to MESSER GIOVANNI DI  
BENTIVOGLIO at Milan

*Magnifice vir*,—By your letter of the 1st I see what the Lord of Forlì has answered. I cannot understand how this

<sup>1</sup> Philippe de Comines.

<sup>2</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, op. cit. ii. 187.

## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

difficulty has arisen, and it is unreasonable. His stipend at present is 8000 ducats, so he ought to be satisfied with 20,000. Perhaps he does not wish to serve and tries to throw the blame on us. If this is so I do not see what his object is in behaving thus. We will not give more than 20,000 ducats with the title of governor of the camp, and the protection of our League. I have sent again to offer him this, as I had a hint that he would accept. If he does it will be well, if not I shall cut short the negotiation, and we will not mention the matter again.

I understand from letters from the Illustrious Lords of Milan that they encourage Your Magnificence to take steps to obtain the recall of the Legate. This seems to me perfectly justifiable, our League being no longer in any way bound to obey the Pope. His presence can only be harmful and a cause of suspicion. As I am writing I must say that I heartily approve the advice of those Illustrious Princes and think Your Magnificence would do well to get rid of the Legate for your own good and for your reputation, and in order not to appear reluctant in following the advice of those Illustrious Lords and the wishes of our Illustrious League. You will gain in credit and security. I commend myself, &c.—July 4, 1478.<sup>1</sup>

LORENZO DE' MEDICI to GIROLAMO MORELLI, *Florentine  
Ambassador at Milan*

*Magnifice orator tanquam Pater*,—Your letter of the 11th tells me many things to which I now reply. First, if you do not receive news day by day the only reason is that I have so much to do that it is difficult for me to be exact, not to speak of my own dilatory nature. But I will make every effort to inform you of essential matters every day. I will do all I can and even a little more.

I understand what the Magnificent Messer Ceccho and Orfeo told you, and with regard to the affair of Messer

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza vii. No. 413.

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

Ruberto am exceedingly sorry that by no fault of mine they and I have such perpetual annoyance and vexation. Your answer was wise and true. In this business I have never thought or done anything without first referring to them. Whether these ambassadors, who have written what I never charged them to write, have stated the truth I know not. As soon as I heard the news, and that at Bologna they doubted whether Signor Ruberto's father-in-law would give this money, I wrote to Messer Giovanni and sent you the copy, and I showed these ambassadors the admirable reply made by Signor Giovanni. Thus those Illustrious Lords will see that from that moment, for this and many other reasons, Signor Ruberto was the enemy of those Illustrious Lords, as he was mine. I desire to clear this matter up once for all and to settle it, for added to all my other worries it is too much for me to bear.

As to Signor Taddeo we are quite willing to do as you say, but as yet we have not settled with the Lord of Forlì, as he demands more than we can well give. We were willing to pay him 25,000 ducats and to give him the title of Captain-General of our forces. Now he wants double in time of war, besides making many other dishonest demands. We are willing to grant anything he asks when he is employed in fighting outside of Romagna, but not otherwise, and are expecting his answer. If he does not accept we shall break off negotiations, as we should lose in money and in reputation. Once this is settled we can treat with Signor Taddeo, to whom I will write in the meanwhile and find out what he wants. He is now secretly in Bologna.

We have replied in general terms to King René's mandate, as he wrote to us. But privately we have given him to understand that events may take a course favourable to his designs. I am sure that if the League decides to undertake anything in that quarter what we have done here concerning his mandate will be of service to him. I think he intends to return by Milan in order to see Messer Ceccho, at least so he wrote to me,

## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

and I advised him to do so. From what we hear from the camp the enemy makes no sign of life. If they do not receive strong reinforcements, or hopes of some treaty, I think they will do us little harm. But you had better hurry our contingent there, for whom you have the money, and see that they are ready and fit to march; though we hope even without them soon to be as strong as the enemy is at present. Let us know if our contingent from Brescia has passed through, they ought to arrive soon.

We had told Signor Giovanni Conte to come here; but he probably left this morning for the camp as Giovanni di Sapone and Messer Alberto Visconti are both ill, so he was wanted. His men are following to join the others. When necessary to send all to him we can do it from here . . .<sup>1</sup> meanwhile those who are ill may recover. But it is absolutely essential to arrange about a Captain-General who is much needed, although until now there is perfect order and unity in the camp.

You already know from others my desire about Genoese affairs, and that I do not think other matters should be imperilled for them. I know it was unnecessary, but I cannot have done wrong in saying what I thought. I am still of the same opinion that other people should not be placed in a dangerous position unless one is sure of success.

The Office has I believe written to you as to the affairs of the camp and of Montepulciano, as well as about a Brief from the Pope and the answer to it, so I say no more. I commend myself to you.—Florence, July 15, 1478.

LAURENTIUS DE MEDICIS.

### SIXTUS IV. to the DUKE FEDERIGO of Urbino

*Carissime fili noster et affinis salutem et Apostolicam benedictionem*,—We have received your letter written *manu propria*

<sup>1</sup> A piece torn out of the letter.

<sup>2</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza xxxi. No. 31.

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

and were rejoiced to hear your health was good, which is what I desire above all things and for which I pray to God, for nothing is more desirable to us. The letter written by the Florentines, full of contempt of Christ and of His unworthy Vicar does not alarm us, but causes us to think that God has destroyed their intellect and their judgment as a punishment for their sins. We trust that God, whose honour and glory is at stake, will grant you victory in everything, especially as our intentions are straightforward and just. For we make war on no one save on that ungrateful, excommunicated, and heretical Lorenzo de' Medici; and we pray to God to punish him for his iniquitous acts, and to you as God's minister deputed to avenge the wrongs he has iniquitously and without cause committed against God and His Church, with such ingratitude that the fountain of infinite love has been dried up.

To the Venetians we have replied in proper terms that if they act unjustly God is above all, and will requite every one according to his acts.

We have sent many Nuncios with our justification to the King of France and to other princes, such as the Emperor, the Kings of Hungary and Spain, and all the others.

Moreover our Bull which has been printed and published to the whole world will justify us; but allowing that everything goes wrong we shall rejoice in dying as a martyr and bear every persecution for love of the Church of God of which we are the unworthy head. We are sure that when you reflect on what merit you will acquire before God for defending His Church you will act as a true Christian Prince, and that my son the Duke of Calabria, together with yourself, will obtain glory with God and men; the Church will support you who support a just cause, &c. I am told that some, from ignorance or malignity, depict me as of hell; this I do not refute, but only despise their words, confiding in thy fidelity who wilt not abandon God and me, who trust in thee, so I let who will talk.

These French ambassadors are, they say, coming to us,





X Al nome di Dio.

Domine et maggiore mio, ieri ebbi una tua per quella m'avisi del governo mio intorno a fatti del bangno ero diliberato far tanto quanto m'avisi per la letera tua et quanto per maestro Giovanni mi sarà ricordato et non mi parà fatica ne disagio niuna chosa per la santa la quale credo, gratia di dio, che n'arà a seguire per modo che credo che tutti ne sarete ben chontenti.

Vego ti se' purgato et vaitene in villa che mi piace et chonfortoti a stare sano et non ti dare manichonia che tornerò guarita. Al maestro Giovanni faremo onore e buona chonpagnia perchè 'llo merita.

La venuta tua se sarà con achoncio et chontentamento di te l'arò molto charo, ma sendoti disagio et schoncio son chontetta la lasci istare, piacemi la Bianca Maria si sia rifatta et chosì priego idio perseveri come il chontentamento vostro e il mio e del marito, lacerò pensare a te, a Maria Nanna et a Filippo ho fatte le salutatione e rachomandasi a te e a tutti voi e rachomandami a Chosimo e mona Ginevra e Giovanni e saluta Pier Francesco e bacia la Bianca Maria per mia parte. Ne' altro per ora. Xpo ci guardi in Petriuolo.

Se si può con tuo chontentamento et achoncio per questo resto del tempo lascianci Francescino l'are molto charo perche eè utile ai bisogni mia in questo luocho nondimeno ogmni tuo chontentamento eè mio.

per la tua LUCRETIA,  
ti si rachomanda.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The letter is addressed in a different handwriting: Spettabili viro Piero di Chosimo de' Medici, Magnifico onorando in Firenze. (*Arch.*, &c., Filza 13, No. 20.)

[illegible]



## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

let us hope that God may inspire us with suitable answers, all which shall be notified to you. Salute my illustrious son the Duke of Calabria cordially from me. For him, as for you, we pray continually to God. I wish thee good health, most beloved cousin.—July 25, 1478.

They threaten schism and disobedience. God's will be done: but it might be desirable that you write to the King of England, and that King Ferdinand should write to his colleagues and to the King of France, as he in his prudence will know how to do in proper terms.<sup>1</sup>

LORENZO DE' MEDICI to GIROLAMO MORELLI,  
*Florentine Ambassador at Milan*

I hear from Naples that the King continues to molest me and my affairs as much as he can by not allowing me to encash and desiring me to pay. I fear that as soon as the Pope hears of these attempts to provoke disobedience he will make some move against my affairs at Rome. Although I think the imminent peril has passed over as I have very considerable credit there, yet I wish that with the utmost caution and care, and so secretly that none but Messer Ceccho should know, you would find out whether I can count upon 30,000 or 40,000 ducats for six or seven months in case of need. I do not expect they will be wanted because, as I said, I think all the ill that could be done to me there has been done, and till now I have been able to provide for everything. Yet, for my own tranquillity I should like to know this, and I have not the least fear that it will be refused. See that you find out at once and let me know, acting with all the caution and secrecy necessary in such business. I have in Rome Antonio and the Portinari, nevertheless I confide this to you alone, and have written with my own hand in order that none should

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita, &c., op. cit. ii. 131.*



## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

great fault. I hope in *bonam partem acceperis rebusque nostris prospectum curabis*.

Madonna Clarice sends you three pheasants and a partridge. She says you are to beware as though they came from an enemy because she does not know the man who brought them; he is the father of your Pisan courier who broke his leg.

By the bearer I send you the opinion of Messer Bartolommeo Sozzino. Every hour I have been entreating him to finish it and found a copyist who made all the haste he could, but it was impossible to get it done quicker.<sup>1</sup>

Piero is well and I take every care of him, all the others are also in good health; but I get all the kicks; yet *te propter Libyeæ*.<sup>2</sup> I am longing for news that the plague has ceased on account of my anxiety for you and in order to return and serve you; for I hoped and I thought to be with you; but as you have, or rather my evil fortune has assigned to me this post in the service of Your Magnificence, I endure it, *quamvis durum, nec levius fit patientia*. I commend myself to Your Magnificence.—Pistoja, August 24, 1478.<sup>3</sup>

### AGNOLO POLIZIANO at Pistoja to LORENZO DE' MEDICI

*Magnifice mi Domine, &c.*,—Madonna Clarice is well and so are all the others. Here we knew nothing of the tumult until the bearer of this gave me Franco's letter and calmed our

<sup>1</sup> After the Pazzi conspiracy the Republic engaged in war with Sixtus IV. and the King of Naples. The Pope excommunicated Florence, as he declared out of hatred of the Medici, whose exile he demanded. The Signoria answered by appointing twelve trusty men to be Lorenzo's body-guard. "Then," writes Ammirato, "they obtained the opinion of Bartolommeo Sozzino (probably what Poliziano refers to), Francesco Aretino, Lancillotto Decio, Bulgarino, Andrea Panormita, Pier Filippo Cornio and other masters of canon law and theology, who advised that notwithstanding the Pope's censures, by whom they had been excommunicated, they, by appealing to the future Council, might cause Divine service to be celebrated in their city," which was done.

<sup>2</sup> This is one of several letters alluding to Clarice's dislike of him.

<sup>3</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita, &c., op. cit.* ii. 183.

<sup>4</sup> Matteo Franco, chaplain and devoted adherent of Lorenzo.



## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

fears which were aroused by his former one ; Madonna Clarice suspected that things were more serious and that you *de industria* made light of them. So now she is comforted *et acquievit*. We want for nothing ; only we grieve sorely over your worries, which are of a truth great. God will help us. *Spes enim in vivis est, desperatis mortui.*

If you have not absolute need of Giovanni Tornabuoni Madonna Clarice wishes you would send him here, she is lonely without him, and for many reasons she thinks it would be well if he came.

I look after Piero and incite him to write ; in a few days I think he will write to you in a fashion that will astonish you, we have here a master that teaches writing in fifteen days, he is excellent at his trade. The children<sup>1</sup> play about more than usual and are in splendid health. God help them and you. Piero never leaves me or I him. I wish I had to serve you in some greater thing, but as this has fallen to my lot I do it willingly. *Rogo tamen, ut aliquid aut literarum aut nuntii huc perlatum iui cures, desque operam, ne quidquid est in me auctoritatis, patriaris exolescere, quo et puerum facilius in officio teneam, et meo munere, ut par est defungar. Sed hæc si commodum ; fin minus, quod fors feret, feremus æquo animo.* Be of good cheer and take courage, for great men are formed by adversity. *Durate, et vosmet rebus servate secundis.* I commend myself to you.—Pistoja, August 26, 1478. Your servant,

ANG. POL.<sup>1</sup>

AGNOLO POLIZIANO at Pistoja to LORENZO  
DE' MEDICI

*Magnifice mi Domine*,—All the family here are well. Piero studies but little, every day we go out enjoying the country. We visit the gardens of which the town is full, and sometimes

<sup>1</sup> *Prose Volgari inedite, &c., op. cit. p. 59.*

## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

the library of Maestro Zambino, in which I have found several good things, both in Greek and in Latin. Giovanni is on his pony all the day, and all the people run after him. Mona Clarice is very well; but takes little pleasure in aught save any good news we get from Florence. She rarely goes out. We want for nothing. Presents we refuse, save salad, figs, and a few flasks of wine, some *beccafichi* or things of that sort. These citizens would bring us water in their ears. From Andrea Panciaticchi we have received so much kindness that we are all indebted to him. We keep good watch and have begun to put a guard at the gates. Be of good cheer and conquer; and when you have time come and see your family who expect you with open arms. I commend myself to Your Magnificence.—Pistoja, August 31, 1478.<sup>1</sup>

AGNOLO POLIZIANO *at Pistoja to LORENZO DE' MEDICI*  
*at Florence*

*Magnifice Domine mi*,—Madonna Clarice has not felt very well since yesterday evening. . . . Piero went out to meet the Lord<sup>2</sup> this morning, and was the first to greet him. He spoke a few words of the sentence you wrote for him very well, and the Lord set him on his horse before him and thus entered Pistoja. Mona Clarice sent him a fine bunch of partridges, and this evening we all go to visit him at twenty-two of the clock, it being now nineteen. Giovanni Tornabuoni was with Piero and finished his little speech. Judging from what his people say, the Illustrious Lord is most anxious to do himself honour and to satisfy the Most Excellent Signoria and especially Your Magnificence.

Clarice sends you I know not how many partridges of those given to her to present to this Lord. I shall see how things

<sup>1</sup> *Prose Volgari inedite*, &c., *op. cit.* p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> Ercole d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, who had been named Captain of the Florentine troops.

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

go and as in duty bound shall inform Your Magnificence, whom God preserve. I commend myself to you.—Pistoja, September 7, 1478. AGNOLO POL.<sup>1</sup>

AGNOLO POLIZIANO *at Pistoja to* LORENZO DE' MEDICI

My letters cannot but be acceptable to you, for I only write to give you news of your family. All, by the grace of God, are well; Piero continues to learn to write and will soon be so good a penman that I hope he will relieve me of the trouble of writing *sine argumento* as I do now to you, so that I am ashamed of myself. But may it please God that I shall always have to write the same words to you, which are that we are all well. Madonna Clarice is much happier and better in health. We keep good guard and watch here, but we are anxious about you. God keep you, for it seems to me that all depends upon that. Have no fear about us, for we are very careful. As far as I am concerned neither care nor goodwill shall be wanting. I know how much I owe to Your Magnificence, and the love I bear to Piero and to your other children is hardly second to your own. If anything unpleasant and unkind does sometimes happen I shall endeavour to bear it for love of you, *cum omnia debeo*. I commend myself to you.—Pistoja, September 20, 1478. AGNOLO POLIZIANO.<sup>2</sup>

PIERO DE' MEDICI (*born 1472*) *to his father*  
MEDICI

*Magnifice Pater mi*, &c.,—I write this letter to tell you we are well, and although I do not as yet know how to write well, I will do what I can. I shall try hard to do better in the future. I have already learnt many verses of Virgil, and I

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, op. cit. ii. 184.

<sup>2</sup> *Prose Volgari inedite*, op. cit. p. 64.



*Atinari*

**PIERO DI LORENZO DE' MEDICI.**  
*Detail from the fresco by Domenico  
Ghirlandaio in the Church of S. Trinità,  
Florence.*



## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

know nearly the whole of the first book of Theodoro by heart ;<sup>1</sup> I think I understand it. The master makes me decline and examines me every day. Giovanni comes to mass sometimes with the master. Madonna Clarice and the others are well. I commend myself to you.—Pistoja, September 21, 1478.

V. M. FILIUS PETRU DE MEDICIS.<sup>2</sup>

In October or November of 1478 Clarice and the children left Pistoja and went to the great fortress-villa Cafaggiuolo in the Mugello, which in winter must have been terribly cold and dreary.

### CLARICE DE' MEDICI to LUCREZIA

*Magnifice Mater honoranda*,—On account of the bad roads and the much rain we have not sent in the carrier for three days. Now either he or another will go to you with this: because I wish to know how you and Lorenzo are, and the others. I beg of you to write and tell me. We, by God's grace, are all quite well but in the water above our heads. We remain all day in the house, and nothing gladdens us so much as letters and news from you all. I commend myself to you.—Cafaggiuolo, December 16, 1478.<sup>3</sup>

### AGNOLO POLIZIANO to LUCREZIA DE' MEDICI

*Magnifica Domina mea*,—The news we can send you from here are these. That the rain is so heavy and so continuous that we cannot leave the house and have exchanged hunting for playing at ball, so that the children should have exercise. Our stakes are generally the soup, the sweet, or the

<sup>1</sup> The grammar of Theodoro Gaza, a Greek, was the favourite one in those days.

<sup>2</sup> *Letterine d'un Bambino Fiorentino*, Nozze Bemporad-Vita. Firenze, 1887. Ediz. di 150 esemplari.

<sup>3</sup> *Vita Nuova*, op. cit. No. x. p. 2, Guglielmo Volpi.



## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

meat ; and he who loses goes without ; often when one of my scholars loses he pays tribute to Sir Humid.<sup>1</sup> I have no other news to give you. I remain in the house by the fireside in slippers and a greatcoat, were you to see me you would think I was melancholy personified. Perhaps I am but myself after all, for I neither do, nor see, nor hear anything that gives me pleasure so much have I taken our calamities to heart. Sleeping and waking they haunt me. Two days ago we began to spread our wings for we heard the plague had ceased ; now we are again depressed on learning that it still lingers. When at Florence we have some sort of satisfaction, if nought else that of seeing Lorenzo come home in safety. Here we are in perpetual anxiety about everything. As for myself I declare to you that I am drowned in weary sloth, such is my solitude. I say solitude because Monsignore<sup>2</sup> shuts himself up in his room with only his thoughts for company, and I always find him so full of sorrow and apprehension that my melancholy is only increased in his company. Ser Alberto di Malerba mumbles prayers with these children all day long, so I remain alone, and when I am tired of study I ring the changes on plague and war, on grief for the past and fear for the future, and have no one with whom to air my phantasies. I do not find my Madonna Lucrezia in her room with whom I can unbosom myself and I am bored to death. Our sole relief is in letters from Florence, from Malerba, who has written these last few days, but I must tell you he generally sends good news which we believe for a little while, such is our desire that they may be true. But these plums usually turn into sloes. However I am trying to arm myself with hope and cling to everything in order not to sink to the bottom. I have nought else to say. I commend myself to Your Magnificence.—Cafaggiuolo, December 18, 1478. *Servitor* ANGELUS.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A saying still used when a child cries.

<sup>2</sup> Probably Gentile Beochi, Bishop of Arezzo.

<sup>3</sup> *Prose Volgari inedite*, op. cit. p. 67.

# LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

LORENZO DE' MEDICI *to the* KING OF SPAIN

MOST SERENE AND EXCELLENT LORD MY KING: after humble recommendation, &c.,—I have been informed during the last few days that your Majesty wrote me a letter full of affection and benevolence at that terrible time when my beloved brother Giuliano was so cruelly torn from me in the centre of the church, and when I was wounded. This letter, I know not why, never reached me; would to God it had, for the emotion evinced by so great a King would have been a great comfort to me when I was oppressed by such a terrible sorrow. Had I only known that the letter had been sent by your Majesty and delayed in the journey, it would have been no small comfort, and I should have at once thanked your Majesty for such a proof of kindly feeling towards me. Even now I send most heartfelt thanks and express my deep obligation. I desire nothing more than that an opportunity may arise for me to show my devotion to your Majesty. It is far beyond my power to repay not alone the letter, but even the slightest sign from so great a King, all I can do is to place myself entirely at your Majesty's orders. I commend myself ever to your Majesty O my Lord and King, and beg to be taken under the shadow of your wings. Your Majesty is I know fully acquainted with our affairs. We are preparing for war and working hard to be able to resist the forces of the enemy. Resist we shall, as I hope, because we shall not fail to ourselves, and I trust God will aid the good cause. Again I commend myself to your Majesty, whom may God preserve in happiness.—Florence, April 3, 1479. Your Serene Majesty's most devoted servant,

LORENZO DE' MEDICI.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, op. cit. ii. 132.

# LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

AGNOLO POLIZIANO, *from Cafaggiuolo, to* LORENZO  
DE' MEDICI *at Florence*

AGNOLO POLIZIANO to his patron LORENZO DE' MEDICI greeting.

Our little friend Piero writes you about what is happening here at Cafaggiuolo ; it is my part to explain that his last letter was not, like the previous ones, submitted to me for suggestions while he composed it and then a fair copy made. It was completed in one sitting, as the saying is, and by himself alone. I only suggested in course of conversation what he should write about. The words and the composition are all his own.

I am training him in such a way that I have no fear but that he will fulfil the expectations I have formed of him, although you fear his excessive impetuosity.

As for Giovanni, you will have seen for yourself. His mother has taken it upon herself to change his course of reading to the Psalter, a thing I did not approve of. While she was absent he had made wonderful progress. He was already able to select, without any help from me, all the letters and syllables in his exercise in composition.

My only petition to God is that I may be able to prove to you some day my loyalty, diligence, and patience. This I would willingly purchase even at the expense of death.

I omit much lest I should weary your busy mind.

Farewell and remember me with all the rest.—From Cafaggiuolo, April 6, 1479.<sup>1</sup>

PIERO DE' MEDICI *to his father* LORENZO

*Magnifice pater mi honorande, &c.*,—Till this day I have not written to you because nothing of importance has happened. A few days ago three well-armed boats arrived in the port of Cafaggiuolo from the village of Mozzete to offer us their

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, op. cit. ii. 186.

## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

services, and we made them welcome. We do not know what to do ; I wish you would send us the best sporting dog that can be had. Nothing more. We all commend ourselves to you, I above all. I beg you will guard yourself from the plague and that you will remember us because we are little and have need of you. We are all well, thanks be to God, and so is Giuliano. I attend to my studies and the master commends himself to you.—Cafaggiuolo, April 16, 1479.<sup>1</sup>

### AGNOLO POLIZIANO to LORENZO DE' MEDICI

*Magnifice mi Domine*,—I am here at Careggi, having left Cafaggiuolo by command of Madonna Clarice. The cause and the manner of my departure I should wish, indeed I beg of you as a grace, to explain by word of mouth, it is too long to write. When you have heard me I think you will admit that all the fault is not mine. Out of respect, and not wishing to come to Florence *præter jussa tua*, I am here to await the commands of your Magnificence as to what I am to do, because I am yours even if the whole world was against me. If I have had but small success in serving you it was not that I did not serve with all my heart. I commend myself to Your Magnificence, at whose commands I am most entirely.—Careggi, May 6, 1479. Ever Your Magnificence's servant, ANGELUS POL.<sup>1</sup>

### PIERO DE' MEDICI at Cafaggiuolo to his father LORENZO (in Latin)

MAGNIFICENT FATHER,—Lucrezia and I are trying who can write best. She writes to grandmother Lucrezia, I, my father, to you. The one who obtains what he asks for will win. Till now Lucrezia has had all she wished for. I, who have always written in Latin in order to give a more literary tone to my

<sup>1</sup> *Letterine d'un Bambino Fiorentino*, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup> *Prose Volgari inedite*. &c., op. cit. p. 70.

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

letters, have not yet had that pony you promised me ; so that I am laughed at by all. See to it therefore, Your Magnificence, that she should not always be the winner. The war as far as I understand goes in our favour this year, but we do not quite understand how the sword that wounded us is to be broken if only the sheath is hit. For if the enemy makes war on us even outside his own country, on what does he rely for again attacking us another year when tired out. We only hope for peace through victory. Scipio is to be driven to Carthage in order to get Hannibal out of Italy. We beseech you, we your children, to have the more care for yourself the more you see that the enemy rather lays hidden snares than dares open warfare.

I commend Martino to you, who aids me not to forget my Greek and to improve my Latin.<sup>1</sup> He would have been named chaplain of S. Lorenzo by his patrons, Antonio and Lorenzo Tornabuoni, had not Your Magnificence recommended another. It is but just that they should bestow their patronage on their own people, and not be prevented in so doing by you, who in general give to others what is yours. I hope therefore to have letters recommending my Martino to those to whom he has already recommended himself. God save you.—26th May 1479.

YOUR SON PIERO.<sup>2</sup>

### CLARICE DE' MEDICI to her husband LORENZO

*Magnifice Conjux*, &c.,—I hear the plague is committing more ravages in Florence than usual. Your wife and children pray with all their might that you will take care of yourself, and if you can, with due precaution, come here and see the festival we should be greatly consoled. I should be glad not

<sup>1</sup> Martino della Comedia, tutor to the Tornabuoni children, took Poliziano's place for a while after he had been dismissed by Madonna Clarice.

<sup>2</sup> *Letterine d'un Bambino Fiorentino*, op. cit. The letter is undated, but on it is written, "From Piero de' Medici, 26th May 1479."

## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

to be turned into ridicule by Franco, as was Luigi Pulci, and also that Messer Agnolo [Poliziano] should not be able to say that he will live in your house whether I like it or no, and that you have put him into your own room at Fiesole. You know I told you that if you wished him to remain I was perfectly content, and although I have endured a thousand insults if it has been by your permission I will be patient, but this I can hardly believe. I quite understand that Ser Niccolò has entreated me to make peace with him. The children are all well and long to see you, I long even more, for I have no other torment than that you should be at Florence during such times. I commend myself always to you.—Cafaggiuolo, May 28, 1479.<sup>1</sup>

### LORENZO DE' MEDICI *to his mother* LUCREZIA *in Florence*

MOST BELOVED MOTHER,—You will have heard from Ser Niccolò that there has been a case of plague at Cafaggiuolo, I have nothing more to add. For precaution sake we left there at once and came to Trebbio. I enclose a list of things Messer Stefano has prescribed in order to be prepared should anything happen. Please God it may all end in nothing. Do not be at all anxious. No more.—Trebbio, May 31, 1479.

YOUR LORENZO.

Send the things here quickly.<sup>2</sup>

### PIERO DE' MEDICI *at Cafaggiuolo to his father* LORENZO

MAGNIFICENT FATHER MINE,—That pony does not come, and I am afraid that it will remain so long with you that Andrea will cause it to change from a beast to a man, instead of curing its hoof.

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentius Medicis Vita*, &c., *op. cit.* ii. 288.

<sup>2</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza xxxvii. No. 389.



## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

We are all well and studying. Giovanni is beginning to spell. By this letter you can judge where I am in writing; as for Greek I keep myself rather in exercise by the help of Martino than make any progress. Giuliano laughs and thinks of nothing else; Lucrezia sews, sings, and reads; Maddalena knocks her head against the wall, but without doing herself any harm; Luisa begins to say a few little words; Contessina fills the house with her noise. All the others attend to their duties, and nothing is wanting to us save your presence. We hear that things are better than last year, and hope that you being well there will be nought but victory in the future. Strong and brave men are not good at subterfuges but shine in open warfare. Thus we confide in you, as we well know that besides your goodness and valour you bear in mind the heritage left to us by our ancestors, and the injury and outrages we have endured. God save you.—1479.

YOUR SON PIERO.<sup>1</sup>

PIERO DE' MEDICI *at Cafaggiuolo to his father*  
LORENZO

MAGNIFICENT FATHER MINE,—I fear that some misfortune has happened to that pony, for had it been well I know you would have sent it to me as you promised. I beg of you therefore as a grace that you will take this fear from me; for I think of it night and day, and until the pony comes I shall have no peace. In case that one cannot come be pleased to send me another. For, as I have already written to you, I am here on foot, and sometimes it is necessary for me to go in the company of my friends. See to this therefore, Your Magnificence.

I am studying hard, and all here attend to their duties. It only needs that you should diligently guard yourself from

<sup>1</sup> *Letterine d'un Bambino Fiorentino*, op. cit.

## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

the plague and from every other danger of death, and that you should come here sometimes to see us. God save you.—  
1479.

YOUR SON PIERO.<sup>1</sup>

PIERO DE' MEDICI *at Gagliano to his father*  
LORENZO

*Magnifico Patri meo*,—I cannot tell you, Magnificent Father, how glad I am to have the pony, and how his arrival incites me to work. If I desire to praise him, *Ante diem clause componet vesper Olympo*. He is so handsome and so perfect that the trumpet of Maronius would hardly suffice to sing his praises. You may think how I love him; particularly when his joyous neighs resound and rejoice all the neighbourhood. I owe you and I send you many thanks for such a fine gift, and I shall try and repay you by becoming what you wish. Of this be sure. I promise you that I shall try with all my heart. We are all well, and we all long for your arrival. God save you.—  
1479.<sup>2</sup>

YOUR SON PIERO at Gagliano.<sup>3</sup>

ANTONIO PUCCI *to LORENZO DE' MEDICI at*  
*Cafaggiuolo*

*Magnifice Frater honorande*,—That priest from Imola has been interrogated. He says Count Girolamo [Riario] sent him here to offer, on the pretext that he had been badly treated, to poison the Count; thinking that we, desiring the Count's death, would entrust him with poison. We were then to be accused to the Pope, and in the Consistory, and the Count was to show the poison, saying, "See, Lorenzo de' Medici has attempted to poison me." He also offered to consign into our hands one of the gates of Imola in order to accuse us before the Pope and the Cardinals so that they might imagine that

<sup>1</sup> *Letterine d'un Bambino Fiorentino*, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> In the Val di Sieve, not far from Cafaggiuolo.

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

we were going to make war on the Pope. He has been tortured and shall be put to the question again in order to get everything out of him. God guard thee.—Florence, June 18, 1479.

Till to-day there have been eighteen deaths and fourteen new cases [of plague]. Benedetto Nori is one.<sup>1</sup>

LUCREZIA DE' MEDICI (*daughter of Lorenzo*) to her grandmother LUCREZIA

MAGNIFICENT AND LOVED AS A MOTHER,—I send you news that we are all well; and I hope you are so too, may God keep us so. I long to see you and pray you to come, for it seems to me a thousand years since I last saw you. Mona Lucrezia mine, I wish you would send me a sash of the *palio* of Sancto Giovanni, or better still that one from Volterra which was given to you when you stood godmother to me. Piero and Maddalena commend themselves to you and Giovanni begs you to send him some sugar-plums, he says that last time you sent very few. I pray you to answer, for reading your letters is a great comfort to me. No more. Christ guard you from all ill.—Written on July 7, 1479.

YOUR LUCREZIA in Cafaggiuolo.<sup>2</sup>

NANNINA RUCELLAI to her mother LUCREZIA DE' MEDICI

To the honoured hands of the Magnificent LADY LUCREZIA DE' MEDICIS at Careggi.

DEAREST MOTHER,—I must tell you that Bernardo has dismissed the tutor to my great sorrow, as I do not know where to send him. At Figline, from whence he comes, the plague is very bad; in his house two of his brothers are dead

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, op. cit. ii. 199.

<sup>2</sup> *Affetti di Famiglia*, &c., op. cit.

## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

and his father is ill. Vincenzo has not a farthing, if he had anything he spent it here in clothes, and now we repay him with "Go in peace." Nothing could be more displeasing to me. Whoso wants to do as they wish should not be born a woman. I should be so glad if you will ask Lorenzo, if not inconvenient, to give him shelter where he would not be in the way for two or three months until the plague has ceased. I do not think he is capable of teaching any save the little ones, whom he might look after and teach. You could not do me a greater pleasure, as it will show that I have some one who is willing to oblige me; there are others who do the reverse. If during this time he should be in need of a little money for his clothes I will provide it from my own pocket, for he seems to me in a bad plight. Here I could give him nothing as I had no money. I should be glad if any small sum comes into your hands or any small living you would help him, for I do not like to repay him with ingratitude. We are all well. I commend myself to you, commend me to Lorenzo and kiss Giulio for me. Christ guard you and see that you guard yourself.—In Casentino, July 12, 1479.

YOUR NANNINA<sup>1</sup>.

BIANCA DE' PAZZI *to her mother* LUCREZIA DE' MEDICI  
*at Careggi*

DEAREST AND MOST HONOURED MOTHER,—I have had a letter from you which has greatly consoled me as I see you are all in good health, particularly you and Lorenzo, I pray God to keep you so for many years. I have not written before as I feared to importune you and also because I have sent often to your house to Marco for malvasy and for the book of St. Margaret, all of which I have received; and from him I heard news of you. I should have sent to you [at Careggi] but thought that on account of the plague you would keep close

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza xxx. No. 70.

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

guard. We have had it near here, but by the grace of God it is now finished. So I did not send as I ought to have done. As I told you in Florence I mean to lie in here for I know you have enough on your hands, and I want for nothing. If I am worse than usual which I do not expect as by the grace of God I am very well, I am in the ninth month now and as I said well, should anything unforeseen happen there is Maestro Giorgio close by who fled here from the plague. So be in no anxiety about me for I feel sure God will assist me as ever, if it so pleases Him. Of the family in the Mugello I hear good news, which rejoices me, and also of Nannina,<sup>1</sup> who they tell me passed along the road going to the Casentino. I am so glad you are all of you well, which is not little to say in such times as these, for I was and I am anxious about you as you said you had to see so many people. I wonder you were not somewhat afraid, but our Lord God will not abandon us entirely. Do persuade Lorenzo to take more care, for I hear he has no fear at all<sup>2</sup> . . . on all sides, and also to beware of his enemies. Until this sickness is past he ought to put his pleasures on one side ; if he lives he will have more than now, for I trust God will recompense him for the ill he has received. I commend myself to him, as do these children, and Guglielmo commends himself to you and to Lorenzo. By the grace of God we are all well.—Alla Torre, July 15, 1479.

YOUR BIANCA.<sup>3</sup>

### AGNOLO POLIZIANO *to* LUCREZIA DE' MEDICI *at Careggi*

MAGNIFICENT MADONNA MINE,—By Tommaso I send back your lauds, sonnets, and poems in terza rima, which you lent me when I was with you the other day. All these women were

<sup>1</sup> Married to Bernardo Rucellai.

<sup>2</sup> The paper is torn.

<sup>3</sup> *Carteggio Medicis*, Filza di documenti fuori posto, No. 73.

## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

delighted with them and Madonna Lucrezia, or rather Lucrezia, has learnt all the lauds and many sonnets of *the* Lucrezia by heart.<sup>1</sup> There is also a little white book in manuscript which I beg you to give to your and my good Giovanni Tornabuoni, it contains certain rules his children asked me to give them. I am also writing to Giovanni, to the children, and to their master. I pray you to give him the letters and to commend me to him, for I set great store and count much on the affection he shows me. I have been to see Lorenzo several times and cannot describe how well he received me. Do try and discover what are his intentions with regard to me; it would surprise me if Piero were allowed to lose time, it would be a great pity. I hear that Messer Bernardo, brother of Ser Niccolò, is with him, but I do not know how his teaching will combine with mine.<sup>2</sup> If he is to remain permanently, then of a truth I can assume that the bubble has burst. But I cannot believe it, and therefore beg you to find out what are Lorenzo's intentions, then I shall know whether I am to arm for a joust only or for war. It will be easy for you and I shall always be at the beck and call of Lorenzo as I am sure he knows better than I, and that he will put me in an honourable position as he always has done and as my fidelity and good services merit. I am working hard. Till now I have not been able to send you the promised book as one copy is at Florence and the other at the binder's who has kept it a long time. As soon as I have it I will send it. I commend myself to you and I pray you to commend me to Lorenzo.—Fiesole, July 18, 1479.

Your Magnificence's servant,                      ANGELUS POLIZIANUS.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lucrezia, to whom Poliziano grudges the title of madonna, was Lorenzo's daughter, afterwards the wife of Jacopo Salviati. She was much attached to her grandmother Lucrezia.

<sup>2</sup> Bernardo Michelozzi, son of the great architect and sculptor, brother of Lorenzo's chancellor. He was known as Bernardo Rhetor on account of his learning and eloquence. Giovanni de' Medici, afterwards Leo X., to whom he was tutor, made him Cameriere segreto, and in 1516 Bishop of Forlì, and allowed him to assume the name and the arms of the house of Medici.

<sup>3</sup> *Prose Volgari inedite*, &c., *op. cit.* 72.



## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

The following extracts from Vespucci's letters to the "Ten" allude to the one victory gained by the Florentine troops over the Prefect of Rome, nephew of Pope Sixtus IV., near Lake Trasimene during the war between Florence and the Pope with his ally the King of Naples, in 1479. But the fortune of war soon changed. The Florentines were beaten at Poggibonsi, within sixteen miles of Florence, by the Duke of Calabria. Fortunately for her, Duke Alfonso stopped to lay siege to the small walled town of Colle which held out for two months and inflicted considerable loss on his army. Meanwhile the summer, generally considered in the fifteenth century to be the only proper time for fighting, was over; the Duke offered a three months' truce, withdrew his troops to winter quarters, and Florence was saved.

GUIDANTONIO VESPUCCI, *Legatus in Epistolis at Paris,*  
*to the TEN OF THE BALIA in Florence*

When the King of France heard the news he gave signs of great joy, kneeling as is his wont three times and kissing the ground, thanking God. All that day he talked of nought else with his people, saying: "My friends the Florentines and my cousin Lorenzo de' Medici will have their revenge this year. . . ." You heard how the King's Majesty had received news of the glorious victory of our troops near Perugia and how delighted he was, so that according to what I hear from court he showed extreme pleasure both by actions and in words, to the great content of the Magnificent Monsignor of Argenton<sup>1</sup> who, as though he had been a born Florentine, continually *tamquam tuba exprobando* the acts of the Pontiff and of King Ferrante, goes about Paris proclaiming our victory; particularly to those ecclesiastics whom I have met sometimes at supper with his Lordship.

Vespucci adds that Louis XI. refused to receive a certain Raffaello Ballerini sent by the Pope to explain his actions, and

<sup>1</sup> Philippe de Comines.

## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

that when King Ferrante asked that his galleys might use the ports of Nice and Provence for the purpose of attacking the Florentines, the Duke of Savoy by command of the King of France refused his consent.—1479.<sup>1</sup>

LORENZO DE' MEDICI to GIROLAMO MORELLI,  
*Florentine Ambassador at Milan*

Yours of the 8th and 9th tell me that everything goes well there. It is useless for me to say much as we must wait to see how affairs shape themselves and try to turn them in our favour. I cannot believe that the Lord Lodovico being all-powerful and an absolute ruler will consent to our undoing, because it would be against his interest. He is by nature kindly and has never received any injury from us either public or private. It is true that he obtained power by the King's favour, but I think he is even more beholden to the help given him by others and to his own qualities. From the little I know of His Lordship he seems to me capable of understanding what is right and willing to execute what he understands. Therefore as soon as you can it would be well to see His Lordship and demonstrate to him that on account of ancient friendship we expect nothing but good from him, there being no reason for antagonism, and according to my view it will be his interest. Impress upon him that this city desires to go hand in hand with the State of Milan, that is with His Lordship, and for this reason beg and encourage him to inform you in some measure of his intentions so that we may act in conformity with his wishes. Explain our difficulties to him, and how they react upon that State, and the remedy which is in his own hands. This is what I have to say at present. As soon as I received your first intimation I despatched Niccolò d'Antonio Martelli, who is very intimate with His Lordship, it was

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, op. cit. ii. 196.

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

through him that formerly I transacted all important affairs with His Lordship. I send him to you to whom he will show all his despatches. He will soon be with you, as to-day he must be at Bologna. It appears to me that we must now throw ourselves entirely into the arms of His Lordship and discover as soon as possible what are his ideas and his intentions towards us, and this quickly, for I have had no letter from him. I have thought it better to write to him and enclose the letter, but I rely more on your interview with him, when you can tell him as much as you think fit of what I have written. I commend myself to you.—Florence, September 11, 1479.

I must remind you of what I wrote yesterday about the Marquis of Mantua. If he is deposed that country will immediately be included among our enemies, it would be our ruin.

LAURENTIUS DE MEDICIS.<sup>1</sup>

In November Niccolò Martelli, the trusted friend of Lorenzo, was still in Milan, and on the 12th Lodovico Sforza (il Moro) told him to inform Lorenzo that the King of Naples would be willing to listen to overtures of peace, and that he strongly advised him to strike while the iron was hot. Ten days later he told the same thing to Pier Filippo Pandolfini, the Florentine ambassador, adding that Lorenzo ought not to trust Venice who thought only of her own interests, and would leave Florence in the lurch. He could himself promise little or nothing as Milan was sore pressed, and he wished Lorenzo to know this, in order to avoid future recrimination. He advised immediate action, and was ready to undertake negotiations with Naples. It is clear that Lodovico had been charged by King Ferrante to sound Lorenzo. On November 24th Filippo Strozzi, who had lived long in Naples and knew the King well, left Florence on a secret mission. "I was to tell the King," he writes in his journal, "that Lorenzo placed himself in the King's hands, and would willingly do all the King desired if he only gave peace to Florence, and restored to her the towns she had lost. I found H.M. at Arnone [at the mouth of the Volturno] hunting, and when I delivered my message he answered that he had later

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza vii. No. 369.

## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

news; that Lorenzo was coming in person, and so we would wait and see what his visit would bring forth."<sup>1</sup>

The following letter from Lorenzo to the Signoria was written after he had started for Naples. Many in Florence feared that he might meet the same fate as Piccinino, who had been invited to Naples and foully murdered by the King's orders.

### *To the SIGNORIA of Florence, from LORENZO DE' MEDICI*

MOST ILLUSTRIOUS MY LORDS,—It is not from presumption that I did not notify the reason of my departure to Your Illustrious Excellencies, but because it seemed to me that the agitated and disturbed condition of our city demands acts and not words. I conceive that she desires, and indeed has extreme need of peace. Seeing that all other endeavours have been fruitless, I have determined to run some peril in my own person rather than expose the city to disaster. Therefore, with the permission of Your Excellencies of the Signoria, I have decided to go openly to Naples. Being the one most hated and persecuted by our enemies I may by placing myself in their hands be the means of restoring peace to our city. One of two things is certain, either His Majesty the King loves our city as he has asserted and some have believed, and is attempting to gain our friendship by affronting us rather than by despoiling us of liberty; or His Majesty really desires the ruin of this Republic. If his intentions are good there is no better way of testing them than by placing myself voluntarily in his power, and I make bold to say that this is the only way to make peace and to render the condition of our city stable. If His Majesty the King intends to attack our liberty it seems to me well to know the worst quickly, and that one should be injured rather than the many. I am most glad to be that one, for two reasons: first, because

<sup>1</sup> *Vita di Filippo Strozzi il Vecchio scritta da Lorenzo suo figlio*, Giuseppe Bini e Pietro Bigazzi, p. 55. Florence, 1851.

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

being the principal object of our enemies' hatred I can more easily and better explain all to the King, as it may be that our enemies only seek to injure me. The other reason is that having a greater position and larger stake in our city, not only than I deserve but probably than any citizen in our days, I am more bound than any other man to give up all to my country, even my life. These are the feelings with which I go, for perchance our Lord God desires that this war, which began with the blood of my brother and my own, should be put an end to by me. My ardent wish is that either my life or my death, my misfortunes or my well-being, should contribute to the good of our city. I shall therefore carry out my idea. If it succeeds according to my wishes and hopes I shall be most glad to benefit my country at the risk of my life and at the same time to save myself. Should evil befall me I shall not complain if it benefits our city, as it certainly must; for if our adversaries only aim at me, they will have me in their hands: if they want aught else it will be patent to all. I am certain that our citizens will unite to protect their liberty, so that by the grace of God it will be defended as was always done by our fathers. I go full of hope, and with no other object than the good of the city, and I pray God to give me grace to perform what is the duty of every man towards his country. I commend myself humbly to Your Excellencies of the Signoria. —From San Miniato on the 7th day of December 1479. Your Excellencies' Servant,

LAURENTIUS DE MEDICIS.<sup>1</sup>

LORENZO DE' MEDICI to ANTONIO MONTECATINO, *Ambassador to Florence of the Duke of Ferrara*

*Magnifice tanquam Pater*,—From S. Miniato I wrote to tell you the reason of my departure, but as a note from you does not mention my letter, perhaps you will have had it later.

<sup>1</sup> Muratori, ix. 533.



## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

Anyhow I reply briefly to assure you that your affairs and those of your and my Illustrious Lord are most dear to me, and that at present and in the future they are and ever will be more so. I know my obligations towards His Excellency, and know what is my duty, which I shall perform. Wherever Lorenzo de' Medici intervenes Your Lordship may be sure that there is one of your most faithful servants. His Excellency will know this from the effects if I succeed in doing what I wish. Meanwhile this is to inform Your Magnificence that I hope to leave here to-night and to join the galleys, which arrived this evening, at dawn. On board is Ser Giamtommaso Caraffa, son of the Count di Matalone, and Prinzivalle di Gennaro, whose position at the court of the Duke of Calabria I think you are aware of. They have come to bear me company, though a far greater man than I am would be much honoured by their companionship. I pray God may lead me there and bring me back in safety, having accomplished something. I beg you to let Your Illustrious Lords and Madonna know what I have written, and I commend myself to their Excellencies and to you.—Pisa, the 10th day of December 1479. FILIUS LAURENTIUS DE MEDICIS.<sup>1</sup>

BARTOLOMMEO SCALA, *Secretary of the Florentine Republic*, to LORENZO DE' MEDICI at Naples

*Magnifice Pater mi*,—I send herewith a duplicate of the mandate in case the first has not reached you, your primary instructions and the letter of credit. I think however that you will have received them as Poccia had a safe-conduct from the Duke.

As you are to use them I hope they are according to your wishes. If anything is wanting I beg you to send me the formula you desire and it shall be sent.

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere e Notizie di Lorenzo de' Medici*. From the Archivio Palatino of Modena, published in a pamphlet by Antonio Cappelli. (This letter has been published before but not correctly.)



## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

I also send you a cipher if you want to write anything secret.

How things go at Sarzana owing to the return of Ser Alessandro you will see by the letter of the 10th. The Duke of Calabria continues the same line of conduct with letters and mandates drawn up like an agreement for peace. It does not seem to me to promise well. Deal with it as you think best. We have more adversaries in this matter than is pleasant, and maybe he who ought to favour us does not do so, but craftily acts against us in the interests of others. I cannot now write more openly, another time I will explain at greater length in cipher

Your letter of the 18th rejoiced us all, and peace seemed imminent. That of the 22nd altered the outlook and gave rise to grave thought in those who heard it. The reply was debated on for several days. You will see what was decided. Only to you would such large powers be given in so important a matter. It is the first time a white sheet [unlimited authority] has been given, for it amounts to that. But as it is to you that such a commission is sent no one doubts that good will come of it. I, as your devoted friend, point out that whatever was not carried through here at once has been completed by the authority given to you in the last paragraph of your letter. Peace would be most welcome here, but if the conditions are not honourable you know our nature; we praise or we blame according to which way the wind blows or our feelings move us. We do not trouble to reason. The Milanese appear favourable but there [at Naples] you will know better about this. Venice will I think not be satisfied with anything which would be displeasing to us. But you understand all this better than I can explain it so I will not enter into more particulars, as I know you are kept minutely informed by others. I commend myself to you.—Florence, January 1, 1479 (1480).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, &c., *op. cit.* ii. 200.

# LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

BARTOLOMMEO SCALA, *Secretary to the Florentine Republic, to LORENZO DE' MEDICI at Naples*

*Magnifice Benefactor mi*,—I take the keenest delight for many reasons in your letters, both in those you write to me and in those written to the Ten. *In primis* for the hope you give both in public and in private of good results. God will not frustrate your work *et ricordabitur servi sui*. You are satisfied with the mandate so I am content. In former times things pertaining to knighthood were much prized there [at Naples]. This is why I acted as I did. I am not at all vexed, how could I be with anything you do with regard to public things or with regard to myself, who owe everything to you and to whom I would give my life?

The affairs of Milan have put new life into some people here, they are well known and much discussed. You will see by the copies the Office sends what has arrived here. But there are those who do not put much faith in words when gainsaid by deeds. Nevertheless the general opinion is that they desire to keep that duck and make it grow, because reason and duty must at last prevail. I tell you this in order that you should insist as much as you can on honourable conditions of peace, so that no one here will be able to say that your going to Naples has made things worse, as a few have already tried to induce others to believe and say: You know how many we are, but boys, &c.

Enclosed is a mandate from the Lord of Faenza. He has talked to me and displays great faith in you, nevertheless I see he is much alarmed, and suspicious of that prince [Duke of Milan?]. A Venetian ambassador is at Faenza with 200 soldiers as a guard. I had the same suspicion, and suspected others as well, as I have told you before, and now it is increased by what has happened at Rimini. Although Pesaro has always followed our lead, yet suspicions and State jealousies have great

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influence on men's minds. We must carefully consider what security can be given to pacify them, particularly as lies are told about everything as one knows is always the case in such important affairs.

Your dealings with H.M. the King about the restitution of Sarzana is much commended. If it can be obtained before peace is concluded, for every one here had lost all hope and even doubted that peace would be made, you would gain much honour and all would be attributed to you.

Here everything goes on as when you left, there is still some ill-humour, but it is I think a good sign that it is less apparent than when you were here. Your reputation seems to have increased and if all ends as we desire and you give us hopes—*nihil supra*. I commend myself to you.—From the Palace [Florence], January 12, 1479 (1480).

News has reached here written from there [Naples] to private individuals in Rome, by, I have been told, persons in your suite, *sunt pleni rimarum* written by them in Naples. If you think this matters admonish them, but without mentioning me, for as you know we live in glass houses."<sup>1</sup>

BARTOLOMMEO SCALA, *Secretary of the Florentine Republic*, to LORENZO DE' MEDICI at Naples

*Magnifice Pater benefactor mi*,—We are all hoping against hope for the conclusion of this affair which has delayed so long, as you will see by the letter of the Ten. Letters from Rome come often to our merchants which addle our brains, not only do they vary every time, but are contradictory. The Pope will never consent. The Count agrees to everything. The Pope agrees, the Count will not hear of it, &c. The news is crumbled into a thousand bits. Messer Lorenzo da Castello has gone to lay the land waste, also he has gone to set things right, also to

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, &c., op. cit. ii. 202 et seq.

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clear up matters, in short infinite are the opinions and the whims. For the love of God get us out of this by the good offices of him [King of Naples] on whom we are to depend in future; for his power and authority are such that finally every one will have to do as he pleases. The Ten desire your return either with peace or without, but more with peace. This long delay is grievous to them and to all, especially to your friends. Yet, notwithstanding, hope and faith in H.M. the King grows day by day and affection towards you. And as it appears *agat partes nostras* in this treaty of peace against our other adversaries, I encourage this opinion as much as I can, because it seems to me beneficial to our public and private needs. Everything here is quiet and in the same condition as when you left, as I told you before. If there is peace you will see how the city will flourish. I commend myself to you.—Florence, January 15, 1479 (1480), *quam raptim*.”<sup>1</sup>

### DOCTOR OLIVERIO, *from Bagno a Morba*, to LUCREZIA DE' MEDICI

MAGNIFICENT AND HONOURED *Domina*, *humili commendatione premissa, salutem*,—In my last I informed Your Magnificence that the spring called *Cacio cotto*<sup>2</sup> gave about six barrels<sup>3</sup> a day and that we are now searching for an increased supply. Being anxious to meet your wishes and to prevent the said water from escaping from whence it rises as I found had been the case, whereby much of its virtue is lost, I caused the building made for Giovanni di Pace to be demolished, and at the bottom, nearly in the centre of the Bath, I found another spring and several smaller ones which will give much water, and are exactly the same as that of *Caccio cotto*, which<sup>4</sup> . . . give twenty barrels, or more.<sup>5</sup> The ingredients contained in the said water are

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. ii. 204.

<sup>2</sup> Cooked cheese.

<sup>3</sup> Three hectolitres.

<sup>4</sup> Letter torn.

<sup>5</sup> Ten hectolitres.

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sulphur and some alum. It is excellent for scabies and for asthma, it is a dissolvent, heals all ills in the body and pains in the joints and the nerves. Many other virtues are contained in it as I will demonstrate to Your Magnificence. Also of the other springs, particularly that of the principal bath, you shall have exact descriptions, for I am analysing the said waters with all diligence, and in three days I hope to finish this work entrusted to me. I commend myself to Your Magnificence.—  
The 28th April 1480. OLIVERIUS MEDICUS.<sup>1</sup>

IPPOLITA MARIA D'ARAGONA, *Duchess of Calabria, to*  
LORENZO DE' MEDICI \*

*Magnifice Domine amice specialissime*,—If Giocacchino had arrived at Florence without any letter from me Your Magnificence would have had every right to complain. To avoid this therefore I write; and also to satisfy H.M. the King, who often asks how I stand with my confederate, that is with you. This letter however is not that of a confederate, nor is it political, but only to tell Your Magnificence how continually we think of you. But we are not at all sure that you often think of our walk, which is in great beauty with all the flowers out, in truth it does not wish to be visited by a crowd in order to put forth tender shoots. Anyhow the walk and ourselves both bear Your Magnificence in our memories. Giovacchino, the bearer of this, is our very good friend, and we recommend him to Your Magnificence, not only in a general way but *etiam* in things which touch his honour and reputation, praying that you will grant him, for love of us, every aid and thus give us much pleasure.—Naples, July 3, 1480.<sup>2</sup>

CASTELLO CAPUANO.

<sup>1</sup> *Carte Medicee*, &c., Filza xxxiv. No. 320

<sup>2</sup> *Vita Laurentii Medici*, op. cit. li. 223.



# LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

PAPINIO DI ARTIMINO to LUCREZIA DE' MEDICI

*Magnifica Domina post humilissima comendamenta vestra,*—  
For some time I have not written to Your Magnificence, now I write to tell you: that this evening news has come from H.M. the King [of Naples] that the Turkish army has arrived in Apulia and has already seized more than twenty towns and castles, and taken prisoners more than fifteen thousand inhabitants, whom they have butchered in most cruel fashion. They are said now to be encamped before a port called Oitontoto [Otranto], where they have disembarked ten thousand men and more than four thousand horses, and have planted many mortars with which they are bombarding the walls. The opinion of those who have been there is that by now the town is lost. This news has made a great sensation here and is held to be very serious. God help us in our need: for I see it will cause the affairs of Italy to be forgotten.<sup>1</sup>

Then there is also a report that H.M. the King has spontaneously ceded all our castles and has ordered M. Giovan Battista Bentivoglio to consign them to the Florentines; this is good news.

I shall have your yarn on the 10th of this month, it has been spun at Naples and Benedetto Salutati writes that you have been well served, so, if you wish, as soon as I get it I can send it on to you. I delayed, if you remember, until my return. Tell me what to do and your commands shall be obeyed. I think we shall be here all September. I have no more to say save that I commend myself to Your Magnificence, and if any friend of yours is at present Vicar of San Giovanni,

<sup>1</sup> The fall of Otranto mentioned in this letter was such a godsend to Lorenzo that he was suspected of being in league with the Turk. It forced the King of Naples to recall his son, the Duke of Calabria, from Siena, where he had aided the nobles to overthrow the popular government, and the Pope to cancel the interdict and make peace with Florence. In November an embassy, with old Luigi Guicciardini at its head, went to Rome and were solemnly reprimanded by Sixtus and then blessed. The only condition he imposed was the equipment of fifteen galleys to serve against the Turk.



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I beg you to keep me in mind, for I should do you honour.  
Valetè.—In Rome, August 4, 1480. Your servant,

PAPINIO DI ARTIMINO, *Cancellarius*.<sup>1</sup>

PAPINIO DI ARTIMINO, *from Rome, to* LUCREZIA  
DE' MEDICI

*Magnifica atque honestissima Domina, post recomandationem*  
&c.,—In my last of the 2nd instant I replied to a letter of  
Your Magnificence of the 26th of last month, and informed  
you of what had happened until now.

Now I must tell Your Magnificence that this morning while  
visiting the ambassador of H.M. the King to hear whether  
there was any fresh news, he told me that he had heard from  
the Venetian ambassador that the Turkish camp which was at  
Rhodes had been broken up, and the army had returned to  
Constantinople, the Venetian ambassador said he had letters to  
this effect. If true, this seems to me good news.

On Monday morning a school-building here fell and it was  
feared that more than twenty boys had been killed. But only  
the master perished, which is looked upon as a great miracle.  
The loud screams of the fathers and the mothers cannot be  
described. God, at that moment, shielded innocence. He  
continues to work great wonders. Let us pray that He will  
not look at our great sins.

Messer Antonio Ridolfi, the ambassador of our Republic,  
bears himself in such guise that all the citizens are much  
indebted to him, he never ceases day or night to solicit and  
press forward their affairs. I have hopes in Almighty God  
and His glorious Mother the Virgin Mary that he may return  
with great honour and an end be put to so much tribulation.  
May God be pleased to do this.

By my letter of the 23rd of last month I suggested, in case  
you and the Magnificent Lorenzo approved, that His Magnifi-

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza xxxiv. No. 367.

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cence should write a letter to the Cardinal of Milan and one to the Cardinal of Portugal advising and begging them to accelerate this holy enterprise; for although they are well disposed yet I know it would help matters much. I see their Seigneuries often and they are favourably inclined. *Valete.—Ex Roma, die 3 Octobris 1480. Vester servitor fidelissimus.*

PAPINUS DE ARTIMINUS, *Cancellarius*.<sup>1</sup>

### LORENZO DE' MEDICI to the DOGE OF VENICE

I cannot refrain from thanking Your Serenity for deigning to write to one of your servants, by whom your letters on any subject are so highly valued and esteemed. This is the case now that Your Serenity informs me that the Magnificent Messer Andrea Cappello and his brothers are satisfied. I do not feel that I need trouble Your Serenity with any explanations about this business as I have written to Giovanni Frescobaldi [Florentine ambassador at Venice] to explain some points by which Your Serenity will see that I have fulfilled *ad unquem* the obligations imposed on me by those known to Your Excellency. I beg humbly that you will deign to listen favourably to the reasons Giovanni will state in my defence and to rest assured that as I have never yet broken faith with any man I shall not be found wanting in far more important affairs than those now under discussion by those Magnificent Citizens. I trust that the friendship that has always existed between us will be preserved by the intervention of those who have concluded this business between us and will enable me to continue to act according to my precepts. I confide in the great goodness and clemency of Your Serenity when you hear my justification, and I desire and hope to retain the good opinion and the friendship of Your Excellency, which has been gained by the

<sup>1</sup> *Lucrezia Tornabuoni*, op. cit.

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long service of my ancestors and myself to that Illustrious State and to Your Serenity.—1480. To whom, &c.<sup>1</sup>

*To ALBINO, dear to me as a brother, Secretary of the  
Illustrious DUKE OF CALABRIA, from LORENZO DE'  
MEDICI*<sup>2</sup>

ALBINO MY DEAR AND GOOD BROTHER,—I cannot decide whether your letters of 2nd and 8th May give me more pleasure than pain. With the strongest desire for the fame of our Lord Duke, which has begun so well by the good beating of those Turkish dogs on the 18th, comes a fear that His Lordship may not come to some harm by his courage. Those skirmishes which you describe, at which His Lordship often assists, made me turn pale more than once, for I have read and re-read your letter. If possible, my Albino, send us news often, and implore His Lordship to be cautious. I will say no more because I feel nervous as I write. Bid him to take care of his person for the sake of God and himself, and for us his servants, and do what is needful at the peril of others and not of his own. You, who are by his side, must see to this even at the price of your own life, and if you do not on your own account do it for mine, if you love me. Commend me to His Lordship. I anxiously await your reply to hear whether this my friendly recommendation has any effect without hindering what I look upon as certain, and that is that His Lordship will return from the expedition wreathed with laurels. So I expect from day to day to have your news.—Florence, May 18, 1481.

LAURENTIUS DE MEDICI.<sup>3</sup>

These and other extracts from despatches of the various Ferrarese ambassadors are inserted as they give such vivid

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza, No. 43, inside No. 150.

<sup>2</sup> Giovanni Albino, a Neapolitan, historian and politician, and a great friend of Lorenzo.

<sup>3</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, op. cit. ii. 216.

## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

pictures of Lorenzo and of the condition of Florence. Day by day rumours, gossip, and their own conversations with Lorenzo were noted down for the information of their master Ercole d'Este, Duke of Ferrara and Modena.

*From BARTOLOMMEO SGNIPPI, Clerk of the Embassy, to ANTONIO MONTECATINO, Ambassador of the Duke of Ferrara (who had gone to Ferrara for a few days) to the Florentine Republic*

MAGNIFICENT AMBASSADOR,—I make known unto you that the day before yesterday in the evening a certain Moroto Baldovinetto was arrested, and yesterday morning Battista Frescobaldi, who were about to assassinate the Magnificent Lorenzo de' Medici with poisoned daggers. Their ancestors were great people, but these fellows are of no standing. Moroto was at Rome several days with Count Girolamo (Riario) and has only just returned; as yet it is not known whether the Count is mixed up in the affair . . . June 3, 1481.<sup>1</sup>

The confession of these two ruffians who wanted to assassinate the Magnificent Lorenzo and who were hung this morning at eleven o'clock in the palace of the Bargello, is that Baptista Frescobaldi, the man who arrested Bernardo Bandini at Constantinople,<sup>2</sup> told the Magnificent Lorenzo that he had spent so much for the said arrest and that he did not consider the Magnificent Lorenzo had paid him *secundum eius rationem* and claimed more money, which was refused. Seeing that he could not revenge himself in any other way six months ago he determined to murder the said Magnificent Lorenzo. Being at Rome he spoke about it to Neri Acciaiuoli who encouraged him to do the evil deed. Moroto being at the same time at

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere e Notizie di Lorenzo de' Medici*, Archivio Palatina di Modena, published in a pamphlet by Antonio Cappelli.

<sup>2</sup> Bernardo Bandini was one of the men who assassinated Giuliano de' Medici in the cathedral of Florence. He fled to Constantinople and was arrested by permission of the Sultan through the agency of Frescobaldi, Florentine ambassador to the Porte.

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Rome the two began to talk about the government of Florence. Knowing Moroto to be a man of great courage, Neri persuaded him *ad idem scelsus*. Aware that such an undertaking could not succeed without accomplices he brought Moroto and Battista together and thus it was settled. They suggested telling Count Girolamo,<sup>1</sup> but Neri said it would be better to say nothing as the Count, having been blamed enough already, would certainly refuse to join. But he would undertake to provide *quod ille nunquam deficeret, et etiam* would get Obietto (del Fiesco) to lend them men-at-arms, and when everything was ready, would come to Castellina and double the pay for every eventuality in Romagna. He hinted at help from other people and said he had influential and well-known citizens at his back. Now though all this was told to them by Neri, in their confession they declared they did not much believe in him, but thought he did it to encourage them. Through him they obtained a few arms and some money, for it appears that Moroto on being asked whether he had arms said he had a cuirass in pawn. They were given certain chain mail, and stuff for poisoning daggers which he brought to them in a small phial with soap on the top. When they arrived here they tried, following their instructions, to persuade a few hot-headed opponents of the government, &c., to join, but without entering into particulars, save with Francesco Balducci. To him they unbosomed themselves and he promised every help. Balducci having fled, his brother, to whom he had told the project, was arrested. It seems that *post multas cogitationes tandem* they settled to do the deed on one of the three days of the coming feast of the Holy Spirit in the church of S. Liberata, and afterwards to take refuge in some safe house until part of the people had risen. Then, with a banner taken from a church with the arms of the Commune, to parade the streets crying "*Viva il Popolo*," &c., *et præsertim* in the lower parts of

<sup>1</sup> Count Girolamo Riario, the Pope's nephew, was implicated in the Pazzi conspiracy to murder the two brothers Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici.



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the city to broach casks of wine for the poor. Battista was deputed to give the blow, the other two were to defend him. It appears Moroto only joined, persuaded by the words of Neri, for the honour and glory of the thing. They are considered *hominis insani*. The shirts of mail belonging to them were found. This is all that is known of their confession and they say no one else is implicated either here or abroad. Three have been hung, Francesco Baldovinetto, Moroto, and the brother of Francesco Balducci.—Florence, June 6, 1481.<sup>1</sup>

The ambassador hastened back to Florence and wrote to the Duke.

I arrived here on the 6th, at one of the night, and found that the three who had conspired to assassinate Lorenzo had been hung that morning. . . . It is stated that they had no sympathisers in the city but acted like reckless and desperate men . . . though they sounded many they found none willing to listen. I believe people were afraid: but if the deed had succeeded everything would have been topsy-turvy—of this I have no doubt. They showed great hopes and determination. When told they were to die next morning several citizens visited them and exhorted them to take courage. They answered laughing that they feared not death, but that they were grieved not to have been able to free them from such servitude and had only done what any other citizen ought to do, and that if they were only given two hours of freedom they would show what they could do. It is supposed, although not admitted, that others in the city are implicated. They say it does not appear that they had friends abroad, but from what D. Bernardo said to Girolamo it is thought that Neri Acciaiuoli was agreed with Count Girolamo, but did not confide in others. Here, however, they pretend not to believe this; but suspect it the more because so many of their enemies have left for Rome. . . . Your Excellency must know that these men ought *de jure* not to have been hung, for as they committed

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere e Notizie*, &c., *op cit.*, Arch. Pal. di Modena.



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no overt act they did not deserve death. So the Signoria, together with the Seventy, determined that it was *crimen lesæ maiestatis*, alleging that they had tried to curtail liberty and change the government which depended upon Lorenzo; so it was declared that whoever attacked Lorenzo commits *crimen lesæ maiestatis*, thus giving to him great honour. Some say this will rather injure than benefit him, because the more he is elevated above others the more enemies he will have. . . . June 9, 1481.<sup>1</sup>

### LORENZO DE' MEDICI to the DUCHESS ELEONORA D'ARAGONA D'ESTE at Ferrara

*Illma. Domina mea*,—The duty I owe Your Excellency compels me to communicate to you the terrible and disastrous blow that has to-day befallen me through the death of my most beloved mother Madonna Lucrezia. This leaves me utterly desolate as Your Excellency can think, for I have lost, not only a mother, but the only person I could turn to in many vexations and who aided me in many troubles. It is true that we ought to submit patiently to the will of God, but in this case my heart refuses to be comforted. I pray He may perhaps send me patience and comfort, and grant her peace and happiness. Your Excellency to whom I thus pour out my grief for such a loss, and to whom I turn for comfort in such sorrow, will understand the state in which your attached servant, who commends himself to you with all his heart, finds himself.—Florence, March 25, 1482. Your Excellency's  
Servant,

LAURENTIUS DE MEDICIS.<sup>2</sup>

### LORENZO DE' MEDICI to the DUKE ERCOLE D'ESTE

*Illme. Domine mi*,—Although in tears and in great grief I cannot but inform Your Excellency of the terrible loss I

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere e Notizie*, &c., Arch. Pal. di Modena, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

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have sustained by the death of my most dear mother Madonna Lucrezia; who to-day quitted this life. I am more full of sorrow than I can say, as besides losing a mother, at the mere thought of whom my heart breaks, I have lost the counsellor who took many a burden from off me. It has pleased God that this should be and we neither can nor ought to contest His will. Much I grieve that I have not the necessary constancy nor strength of mind, but I pray our Lord God to grant me patience and to her soul peace, as I firmly hope He will on account of her upright life. I write in order that Your Excellency may know the condition in which is one of his good servants who commends himself to you with all his heart. —Florence, March 25, 1482. Your Excellency's Servant,

LAURENTIUS DE MEDICIS.<sup>1</sup>

The peace of November 1480 did not last long. Sixtus IV., entirely under the influence of his nephew Girolamo Riario, had deposed Antonello Ordelaffi in order to give Forlì to Riario, who was known also to covet Faenza. This was a direct menace to Florence whose road to the Adriatic would have been cut off. Ferrara likewise attracted him; he visited Venice, where he was received like a king and made a patrician of the Republic, to plan an attack on Duke Ercole. Venice was to take the Duchy of Modena, which belonged to the Duke, while Riario added Ferrara to his other possessions. A pretext was easily found. The Venetians claimed the sole right of supplying salt to North Italy from Cervia and summoned the Duke to cease collecting it at Comacchio. He refused and war was declared in May 1482. Preparations for resisting Riario and Venice, and defending Ferrara, were pushed forward in feverish haste, as is shown by the letter from the Duke of Urbino to Lorenzo, while those from Ugolino Baccio relate to that simple-minded, scatter-brained Slav, Andrea Zuccalmaglio, a Dominican Archbishop of Krain. Sent to Rome in 1479 as ambassador by the Emperor Frederick III. he was intensely shocked by what he saw and did not hide his feelings. The Pope showed his displeasure and the

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

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Archbishop was recalled. Before he could leave Rome he was imprisoned in Castel S. Angelo, and on his release went to Basel determined to proclaim a Council. He assumed the titles of Cardinal and Papal Legate, and made a clever notary of Trier, Peter Numagen, his secretary, who in his *Gesta Archiepiscopi Crayneris* describes his master as touched in the brain. On March 25th he denounced Sixtus IV. during service in the cathedral and solemnly proclaimed a Council. On July 20th he cited the Pope thus: "Francesco of Savona, son of the devil, you entered your Office not through the door, but through the window of simony. You are of your father the devil and labour to do your father's will." Sixtus excommunicated him and laid Basel under an interdict, of which no notice was taken. He was both angry and alarmed as he suspected the Emperor of secretly abetting the Archbishop, while Milan and Florence sent envoys to see how matters stood. The Florentine evidently at first sided hotly with the Archbishop, and believed in the possibility of a reforming Council. But Lorenzo was cautious. He left Baccio's letters unanswered, to the poor man's discomfiture. The Archbishop was disavowed by the Emperor, and the magistrates refusing to give him up to the papal Legate he was imprisoned in Basel, and hanged himself in his cell in November 1484.

FREDERICK, *Duke of Urbino*, to LORENZO DE' MEDICI

*Magnifice frater carissime*,—By the copy of a letter I have written to the Illustrious Duke of Ferrara which I send to the Honourable Eight of the Balìa, Your Magnificence will see that I have had news of the loss of the fortress of Melara. The enemy evidently means to join that force with their navy and to follow the course of the river to attack Ferrara. There is no doubt that if the Illustrious League does not instantly provide reinforcements in that quarter they may succeed in their attempt, because that Illustrious Lord is not strong enough to resist without help as Your Magnificence knows.

In this state of imminent peril it is imperative that the Honourable Signoria of Florence should send me in all haste as

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many men-at-arms as possible, particularly from Romagna and Valle de Lamone, who are nearer, and being better trained men are more useful than any others. As soon as the Illustrious Duke of Milan sends me the foot and horse I have asked for, I shall advance into the Ferrara territory to keep the enemy in check. If the Illustrious League provide what, for their own honour and advantage, is necessary to enable me to confront the enemy I shall not be found wanting, but there is a great difference between projecting a thing and carrying it through. I do not enlarge on this as I know Your Magnificence will understand how important it is, and *cum omne diligentia* will give the requisite orders.

I remind Your Magnificence about hastening to despatch the troops we arranged were to come into the State of the Signor Constanzio [Sforza] and into Urbino. This is pressing as I have summoned my men to join me here, but until those troops arrive they cannot move as our lands cannot be left defenceless.

My opinion is that the said Signor Constanzio should advance into Tuscany and take up a position between Arezzo and Anghiara, which will not only protect the State of the Honourable Signoria of Florence, but my own and that of Signor Constanzio and perhaps, if fortune favours us, be a means of offending the enemy. It would be a good move and I beg Your Magnificence to send orders from there without losing a moment. I have already given this same advice to His Excellency.—Rovere, May 4, 1482.<sup>1</sup>

UGOLINO BACCIO, *from Basel, to* LORENZO DE' MEDICI

*Magnifice vir, &c.*,—I arrived here on the 14th, and by the aid of a citizen here, called Giovanni Hermin, very friendly to your house, was introduced to Craina.<sup>2</sup> I offered him your

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, op. cit. ii. 236.

<sup>2</sup> Andrea Zuccalmaglio, Archbishop of Krain.

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help in his undertaking, praising him and alluring him *ut moris est*. After exchanging many sweet speeches (*chiaverini*) we came at last to essential matters, to which, although he enlarged *et vultu et verbis* as much as he could, I do not attach more faith than is necessary unless he adduces better evidence. He shows nothing from the Emperor [Frederick III.], which proves there is no great eagerness in that quarter. He talks much about France and other countries, particularly about Savoy, but I believe what I see; there are many ruffians to be found, but I am a cut-throat.

Who does please me is the chief personage. In capacity, talent, and doctrine, he seems to be fit for any great enterprise, *et quod magis me movet* has great knowledge and experience of the world, for many, many years he has been employed in grave affairs and honourable legations.

*Accedit* he is a friar, which is the summit, or the adornment, of all his other qualities, and he has so confident and fearless an air that he would make a man dance a *gagliarda*<sup>1</sup> against his will, whoever he might be.

Secondly the town chosen pleases me. It is convenient, handsome, healthy, and there is ample accommodation for congresses, vehicles, and ships.

Thirdly the citizens are most well-disposed, which pleases me most of all. I have proof of this because they will not permit their priests to observe the interdict and support the Archbishop *quantum possunt*. Yesterday they despatched their Chancellor to the Emperor to complain of the Pope *propter interdictum*, and to remind him not to allow the Council to depart, as if it is not held in Basel it will be transferred elsewhere to his loss and shame, &c.

Another of their ambassadors went to the Emperor a month ago and a courier later with letters. There is as yet no news of either, but they expect an answer from day to day. The Milanese envoy and I are idly waiting and do not know what

<sup>1</sup> An old Italian dance.



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to do with ourselves. We came here as private persons without any show and have not kept our attendants with us, in order not to spend much money in case nothing comes of this business, and so we shall remain for the present.

If a favourable answer comes we shall present ourselves officially to the Commune. Perhaps I shall do so before, without the Milanese, as a guarantee to our persons *in omnem eventum*; particularly as they know through Craina that I am here for this affair, and it might rather cause suspicion and give them a bad opinion of me if I do not announce myself openly and show that I am informed of what is going on. But I have not yet made up my mind and shall follow God's inspiration.

If, owing to the Emperor, the Council is not held here, we have talked of transferring it to Pisa or elsewhere in Italy. His Paternity does not think the idea a bad one. Consider about this and let me know. Pisa would be convenient to the Spaniards and to many other kingdoms, who perhaps would serve our purpose better than Germany. His Paternity is ready to do anything to upset the Pope and the Count [Girolamo Riario]. I have said enough.

I do not write at any length so that you may not be bored. If you desire to know more, ask the Eight to show you what I have written to them with far more details. I commend myself to Your Magnificence.—Basel, September 20, 1482.<sup>1</sup>

### UGOLINO BACCIO to LORENZO DE' MEDICI

MAGNIFICENT LORENZO,—By the Milanese courier who left this on the 20th I wrote very fully to the Eight and also to Your Magnificence, of what had occurred.

Since then nothing of any importance has happened; things seem more favourable than otherwise. The adverse Legates

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, op. cit. ii. 227.



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have made no sign, they are still in a Swiss town called Torego, *alias* Suringg, a long day's journey from here. We suppose they do not like to risk coming here on account of the anger excited by the interdict, and that they are feeling their way how to approach without danger. This is the opinion of the Council. Perhaps they have other designs and are waiting in order to give us a heavier blow. Who knows their secrets? We have no fear of them, if they have of us; but this is uncertain. The fact is they have not come, and as things are they would only arrive here in pieces.

The citizens are strongly in favour of the Council, and unless forced by the Emperor I do not think they will let it drop, particularly as it brings them great gain and honour.

The ambassador sent to Duke Sigismondo has returned bringing, they say, a most favourable reply. I know no particulars as yet, for these people are much more taciturn than we are, and very strict observers of public honour. Unfortunately that friend of the house of Medici has been sent on an embassy, so it is hard fishing for secrets. *Tamen si quid erit, haud diu nos latere potest.*

No reply has yet come from the Emperor. But as the road is long and there is war in the countries the messenger must traverse this is not to be wondered at. An answer is expected every day, so it seems to me that *pendeant leges et Prophetæ*. Other help appears to me vain. We will see what God sends, and I shall inform you of all *cum diligentia*. I have suggested Pisa to Monsignore several times in case Basel fails us, but at present he hopes in Cæsar. Think well about this so that (*quod Dii prohibeant*) we are not left with our feet out of both stirrups.

Monsignore has told the people here that we have come in favour of their cause, and as on account of the delay of these envoys I feared they might draw back seeing Monsignore unsupported, I informed the town council that I was sent officially by our Signoria, presented the letters, &c., and made

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a long oration *in favorem Consilii*, praising the holy enterprise and Craina, and condemning the Sixtine government, and showing the necessity for a Council; all which they heard with great pleasure, particularly as I offered not only help and favour, and embassies and prelates from the Florentines, but promised to confirm this in their name and in that of the League.

I am sure that in their *perplexione propter venturos Legato Pontificiis* this has comforted their minds, *juxta Terentianum illud, dum in dubis est animus*, &c.

They promised to reply *post consultationem*. *Sic res se habent nunc*. To-day I await them in my house and shall hear their answer.

*Post scripta*.—Four of the members have just been here and in the name of the Senate praised my speech, and thank the Florentines for their offers which they reciprocate.

As to the Council they declare that they are well-disposed towards the Apostolic See if the Church is reformed *pro Religione et fide Christi, quam vident in magno periculo vel potius ruina*. They also affirm that they initiated nothing, but only acted according to the wishes of the Emperor, from whom an explicit answer is expected in a few days. When it arrives they will tell me at once so that I can write to my Signoria who can then send prelates and ambassadors as I have promised. For this I thanked them with opportune words. I see that I am everything in their eyes, besides which Craina depends entirely on me and has not been happy since he entered into this business until I spoke officially. He will not let me out of his sight, either to go to the Emperor or elsewhere. A thousand times a day he raises his hands to heaven thanking God for sending me to him. You have no idea how intently these Doctors of the University read the documents I have published. What can I say more? The Pope is more hated here than he is with us, and if the Emperor does not spoil our game *non sum sine spe* to arrive at something.

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This is all I write to-day as I send this by a man who is passing through in haste. Will Your Magnificence be good enough to make my excuses to the Eight? your letter was begun and there is no time to write another. This must serve also for their Excellencies. I commend myself to Your Magnificence.—Basel, September 30, 1482.<sup>1</sup>

### UGOLINO BACCIO to LORENZO DE' MEDICI

*Magnifice vir*, &c.,—By my last of the 24th to the Honourable Eight Your Magnificence will have seen my hopes and designs, and nothing has occurred since to alter my opinion about the Council, although there are doubts as to where it is to be held and as to Craina himself, on account of the great opposition made by our enemies against God and justice. I am in great tribulation at not receiving any reply from Florence to my many letters, sent by trustworthy messengers so long ago that there has been ample time to send an answer to the first three.

Had I only received a hint from Your Magnificence as to the choice of Pisa about which Craina made me write, I should know which way the wind blows and how to steer this unsteady bark. But without any reply, although I know the intentions of Your Magnificence up to a certain point, I do not know them absolutely, as happens to those who, like me, have several affairs in hand.

Although Craina hopes for success here he is feeling his way elsewhere; if he fails here and can extricate himself he will throw himself into the arms of him who promises most. Till now I have only been able to give assurances of my personal aid, promising him support and favour from the League in order to pacify him. But how do I know what will be my fate? Perchance the League will have nought to do with the Council save at Basel, or has some other plan of which I know

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentius Medicis Vita*, ii. 229.

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nothing. So that although I have a general mandate to do all I can to help forward the Council, which I, although you do not write, am doing, yet I do wish for your own particular views, otherwise I grope in darkness.

However now we are here making every effort that things should go forward, and though we found the foundations rather weak we have so propped the house that we do not fear it will fall at every small stroke. But if, through the Emperor or the Swiss, Basel was shut to us, I do not see why the League after such a beginning should abandon the enterprise. I gave the reasons in other letters, but the decision lies with others who perhaps are of a contrary opinion.

I have written a detailed account of what happens to the Eight. My own impressions, such as they are, I write to Your Magnificence, to whom I can explain things with more freedom than to such eminent magistrates. You can therefore guess at the truth; to me it appears that although there is danger there is also hope.

*Exitus in Diis est: tamen* if a month after our arrival here a bishop had declared for us things would not be so backward or so ill looked on as they are; even if one was now on the way here so as not to delay giving medicine to the corpse! *At inquires.* Either the Emperor has not manifested his approval, what then? or he has not openly turned against the enterprise. For my designs it would be sufficient to stay here long enough for things to make a little progress, and then I would gladly pay ready money for a valid impediment in order to transfer all to a more convenient spot. I pray Your Magnificence to take the follies I have written for what they are worth and to judge and command according to your own wishes. *Ego jussa exequar* and to that I commend myself.—Basel, October 25, 1482.<sup>1</sup>

Sixtus IV. had been thoroughly frightened by the threatened Council at Basel and had also fallen under the influence of his

<sup>1</sup> *Lorenzo de Medicis Vita*, op. cit. ii. 232.

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nephew Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, who feared the growing power of Venice and was friendly to the Medici. In December 1482 he hurriedly made peace with Naples and Ferrara, and received the Duke of Calabria in the Vatican. Alfonso then started for Ferrara, passing through Florence early in January, where he stayed three days in the house of Giovanni Tornabuoni. Venice refused to obey the Pope's commands to make peace with Ferrara, and the city was in dire straits. It was only the encouragement and advice of Bongianni Gianfigliuzzi, the Florentine ambassador, that prevented Duke Ercole from quitting Ferrara and taking refuge at Modena. A Congress of the Allies was summoned at Cremona, to which Lorenzo went early in February 1483, in spite of strong opposition from his fellow-citizens, who feared he might be assassinated by his arch-enemy Girolamo Riario. Louis XI. shared these fears as is seen in his letter. The Congress at Cremona consisted of the Cardinal Legate Gonzaga, Alfonso Duke of Calabria, Lodovico and Ascanio Sforza, Ercole d'Este Duke of Ferrara, Federigo Gonzaga Marquis of Mantua, Giovanni Bentovoglio of Bologna, Girolamo Riario,<sup>1</sup> Lorenzo de' Medici, and various envoys.<sup>2</sup>

### LOUIS XI., *King of France*, to LORENZO DE' MEDICI

MY COUSIN,—By your letter of January 30th I learn your wishes regarding your son Giovanni, if I had only known this before the death of the Cardinal de Rohan I should have done all in my power to please you. I will gladly do whatever I can when a benefice falls vacant. As to Ferrara, where you have promised to go, I should have advised you to abstain, and to be very careful about your personal safety, for I do not know the people or the place you will be in. I would gladly have sent an ambassador from here to excuse you. However as you

<sup>1</sup> Guicciardini throws some doubt on Riario's presence.

<sup>2</sup> For a full account of the Ferrarese war see *Lorenzo de' Medici*, Alfred von Reumont, ii. 249 *et seq.*; *A History of the Papacy*, &c., Dr. Creighton, iv. 100 *et seq.*, *Lorenzo de' Medici*, &c., E. Armstrong, M.A., 182 *et seq.*



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have promised I leave it to you, to good fortune, and to God.  
—Written at Plessis du Parc, February 17, 1482 (1483).

Lux.<sup>1</sup>

The following tale and poem in Latin (which I have done into prose) were sent to Lorenzo by Bartolommeo Scala,<sup>2</sup> who prided himself on his literary conceits and on his pure Latinity. I insert them as they are typical of the conceits of the fifteenth century.

### BARTOLOMMEO SCALA to LORENZO DE' MEDICI *at Bagno a Morba*

MY PATRON, greeting,—Last September when I was at Morba, where you now are, for my gout, I composed a conceit on the nymph Amorba, childish enough perhaps. If you have time to read this it may not displease you. Trifles of this kind sometimes give pleasure. Indeed those who have been with you inform me that you have sought anew the society of the Muses and are their constant boon companion. Of a truth they can heal our diseases much more pleasantly than any baths.

This indeed is attested with perhaps a certain neatness by an apologue of mine. It is as follows.

Once upon a time Immortality and Old Age were quarrelling. The cause was small, the quarrel was and still is a grievous one. Immortality had reared from the nest a tame jackdaw, cunning, thievish, clever, with a power of imitating our language not unmusically. She had kept it in luxury for ninety years. The neighbours actually approved of it in their

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita, &c., op. cit.* ii. 298.

<sup>2</sup> Bartolommeo Scala, born at Colle 1430, was the son of a miller. "I came to the Republic," he wrote, "bare of all things, a mere beggar, of the lowest birth, without money, rank, connections, or kindred. Cosimo, the Father of his country, raised me up by receiving me into his family." He became Chancellor of Florence and is known for his feud with Poliziano.



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enjoyment of the constant jesting and laughter which it caused. For it used secretly to steal from the tailor's workboxes rings and needles and other implements, and then, when the fancy seized it, all of a sudden gave them back. How the onlookers used to laugh and applaud when it brought a modest blush to a maiden's cheek as she walked along the road by calling with a gentle chuckle *Ω χόρη καλη*<sup>1</sup> (it had learnt Greek as well as Latin) *‘Ηλίου ως ὁμοιῶ φωτί.*<sup>2</sup> But Old Age was envious and sent disease, her frequent minister, and killed the jackdaw. So was war kindled. Then when Old Age had taken many towns, and sacked many cities, she forced Immortality at length to take refuge in her citadel.

Her citadel stands on a high mountain. Its walls and battlements are of brass, but the rooms of its inner chambers of sweetest-smelling cedarwood. The enemy is held at bay (and this no one who did not know would easily believe) by maidens alone, by three maidens with their songs and verses. Now, could you but extract the harmonies of these maidens from the letters in which they are written and manage to apply them to your bare breast and heart, there is nothing so health-giving against all diseases of body and mind. I commend myself to you. Farewell.—Florence, April 15, 1484.

THY BARTOLOMMEO SCALA.<sup>3</sup>

*“In Amorpham Nympham,” Latin poem by BARTOLOMMEO SCALA, sent to LORENZO DE’ MEDICI at Bagno a Morba, April 25, 1484*

‘Thou askest who I am, what is my name, and whence comes this hot and health-giving water that springs perennial? Once I was the loveliest nymph of these woods. Apollo loved me and gave me the power of curing all ills. Fleeter of foot

<sup>1</sup> O lovely maiden.

<sup>2</sup> Thou art as fair as the light of the sun.

<sup>3</sup> *Arch. di Stato Carte Stroziane*, Filza cxxxviii. No. 57.

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than the stag or the roe, I was the most renowned and the most welcome of the Oread sisters or the Dryads. But we have long known how cruel and potent is fate, and how unstable are all things here below. When wandering one day, bow in hand, my quiver on my shoulder, O unhappy nymph ! Cerberus saw me and was inflamed with brutal lust. Of no avail were my bow, my arrows, or my swift feet. Furiously he pursued me and deaf to my prayers and tears he seized me, O unhappy one. In vain I screamed and struggled, and called upon all the Gods of heaven. Almost vanquished I cried out, imploring aid : "O you sylvan nymphs, have mercy, hasten to save me." The goddesses heard, changed me into a hot stream and thus delivered me from those ferocious hands. As a spring I still preserve the power bestowed by Apollo of curing all ills. Phœbus pitied and wept over my fate, and swore by the Styx to undo thee, O Cerberus. A huge stone, high as a mountain, surrounded by precipices and broken rocks, was torn asunder and a yawning and dark cave opened, whence issued a horrid wind charged with fetid odours. Inside all was putrid, in festering matter lay the entrails and bones of oxen which he bore while yet alive into the cave to satiate his rabid hunger. Whilst intent on devouring the raw flesh and sucking the stream of hot blood, the highborn Archer wounded him. His torn and bleeding entrails gushed forth. But as he could change his form at will, Cerberus became a dog. From three throats came despairing howls and the vapour of burning sulphur when Apollo hurled him down from the rock into deepest hell, where it is rumoured that he still retains the semblance of a dog. There, where the brute sank, remain signs of hell, and they say that sinners are there drawn down to well-deserved punishment. All around are lakes of deep mud ; mud and sulphur are belched up, and from afar one still hears the ever-renewed howling of dogs. The rock preserved the name and the mountain whence it fell is called Cerberus. But I remain unknown, no kind Muse remembered

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me and I waited for one to tell of my woes. Lo he comes, and here he writes a poem for me. Read it, O pilgrim; then thou wilt know that Amorba is the name of the nymph. The waters will drive away all illness, let the sick come here and they will find health.<sup>1</sup>

Lorenzo's great enemy Sixtus IV. died on August 12, 1484, killed, say contemporaries, by a violent fit of anger at the proclamation of the peace of Bagnolo. The Cardinals entered into Conclave on August 26th, and three days later Giovanni Battista Cibò, born at Genoa in 1432, was elected Pope under the name of Innocent VIII.

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GUIDANTONIO VESPUCCI, *Florentine Ambassador at Rome, to LORENZO DE' MEDICI at Florence*

*Magnifice vir*,—If my letter about the election of the Pope [Innocent VIII.] was delayed, the fault lies with Antonio Tornabuoni who sent off the courier without waiting for me. I was at Mass with the other ambassadors and could not leave before them. The Milanese courier was despatched by Francesco da Casale and not by the ambassador. I beg you to excuse me.

Of the new Pope I will tell you all I have heard. As Cardinal he passed for a kindly and benign man, and was most courteous to all, kissing any and all even more than one you know of. His political experience is small and he is not learned, though not ignorant. He was always devoted to S. Pietro in Vincula [Giuliano della Rovere, afterwards Julius II.] and indeed was made a cardinal by his influence. He is tall, full in the face, about fifty-five years of age, and very robust. He has a brother, at least one grown-up bastard son and some daughters, who are married here. As cardinal he

<sup>1</sup> Arch. &c., Carte Stroziane, Filza cxxxviii. No. 58.

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did not agree well with the Count [Girolamo Riario, nephew of the late Pope]. S. Pietro in Vincula is now as good as Pope and will have more power than under Sixtus if he knows how to steer. The Pope has a Genoese friar who is said to have a mistress of the house of Cibò, Guelph of course. Here he has a nephew, a priest, related to Filippo di Nerone, whose mistress is a certain Maria Clemenza—she was wife to Stoldo Altoviti. The late Captain of infantry is married to a relation of his. The Pope seems rather a man in need of advice than one capable of giving it to others.

The election took place thus. The Rev. Monsignori of Aragona and Visconti seeing that they could not effect the election of the Vice-Chancellor and that he stood on the defence, tried to persuade him to play their game, and *ante omnia* reconciled the Camarlingo and Ursino with S. Pietro in Vincula, towards whom they were beginning to be friendly, and I think they promised to arrange the affairs of the Count and of the Camarlingo. Many other promises were made. First, to the Cardinal of Aragona the Pope gives his own house; to Messer di Visconti the house belonging to the Count, which the Pope will pay for, besides 12,000 ducats, the legation of the Patrimony, and I know not what besides at Castello; to Savello the legation of Bolgna; to Milan that of Avignon; all of which latter legations were held by S. Pietro in Vincula who consented to everything in order to carry this business through, he has also renounced certain abbeys to satisfy others whose names I know not. Colonna will no doubt also be recompensed, and the Vice-Chancellor has obtained certain things he wanted in Spain. Noara has had I know what castle. Of others I have not heard. No doubt there are many similar cases.

To conclude, this election is attributed entirely to Monsignore di Visconti and I think you ought to write to him that he should help us when I have need of aid in your affairs. Also send a proper letter to S. Pietro in Vincula for he is the

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only one I have any fear of in the business of Fonte Dolce,<sup>1</sup> he is the Pope, *et plusquam Papa*. Believe me that Monsignori Aragona and Visconti will plunder this court at every election, they are the two biggest scoundrels in the world.

In a few days I shall begin to adjust your affairs and shall succeed, as in the beginning these princes and popes are usually very gracious, and His Holiness is well disposed towards you and has always been very friendly to me. Remember before the new Signori are named to have my leave arranged as I want to be at home during September, and I hope you will grant my desire that my Simone should be made one of the Eight.—Roma, August 29, 1484. Remember also to push on the enterprise of Sarzana, afterwards there might be danger.<sup>2</sup>

According to custom the Republic of Florence sent an embassy to congratulate Innocent VIII. on his nomination. With them went Lorenzo's eldest son, Piero, then fourteen years of age, to whom his father wrote the following letter containing minute instructions as to his speech and conduct. From Lorenzo's remark, "Though thou art my son, thou art but a citizen of Florence," and his impressing upon him to be polite and not to take precedence of his elders, one sees he was already anxious about the boy's overbearing, turbulent temper.

LORENZO DE' MEDICI to his son PIERO in Rome,  
November 26, 1484

Thou wilt have only four letters of introduction for Siena, one to Messer Paulo di Gherardo, one to Messer Cristofano di Guido, and one to Messer Andrea Piccolomini, whom thou art to visit at their houses and there deliver the letters to them.

<sup>1</sup> The abbey of Fonte Doulice, bestowed by the King of France on Giovanni de' Medici, Lorenzo's second son, which gift the Pope hesitated to confirm on account of the child's youth.

<sup>2</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, op. cit. ii. 256.



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Commend me to Their Magnificences, using the same words to all, thus: that passing through Siena on thy way to Rome with these ambassadors I charged thee to visit Their Magnificences whom I love and revere as fathers; that I hope they will regard thee as a son, command thee at any time or in any place, as I do, and that thou wilt obey them; and that as they can dispose of my property, State, and children, of whom thou art one, thou presentest thyself to them as being theirs to dispose of according to their pleasure. Use proper words to this effect without affectation or constraint, and do not try to appear learned with them or with others, but speak graciously, pleasantly, and seriously.

Thou wilt have a list of Sienese citizens to whom, if there is time, thou art to pay visits, using the same words I have already indicated and offering me to them, as well as to the three above-named, for the protection of their State, all the more that our city is of this mind.

When together with other youths of the ambassadors bear thyself sedately, politely, and kindly, towards thy equals. Be careful not to take precedence of those who are thine elders, for although thou art my son, thou art but a citizen of Florence, as they are. When Giovanni [Tornabuoni] thinks fit to present thee to the Pope privately first inform thyself well of all the needful ceremonies, then when presented to His Sanctity kiss my letter which will be given thee for the Pope, entreating him to deign to read it. When it is thy turn to speak, first place me at the feet of His Beatitude, saying that I am aware it was my duty to prostrate myself in person at the feet of His Holiness, as I did at those of his Predecessor of saintly memory; but that I trust in his goodness to forgive me, because at that time I had my brother who was well able to fill my place, whereas at present I have no man of greater years and authority than thyself, and therefore I do not think it would have been pleasing to His Holiness if I had left Florence. Say that I send thee in my stead as the strongest proof I could



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give of my desire to go in person. Besides other reasons also I have sent thee in order that thou shouldst learn early to regard His Beatitude as thy Father and Lord, and be encouraged to continue in this devotion, in which I educate my other children, whom I would rather not have if they were not so inclined. Then thou wilt inform His Holiness that I am firmly resolved not to transgress his commands, because, besides my natural devotion to the Holy See, my devotion to His Beatitude himself arises from many causes and from obligations which ever since I was in *minoribus* our house has received from him. Add that I have experienced how hurtful it has been to be out of favour with the late Pontiff although, as it seems to me, I was unjustly persecuted rather for others' sins than for any insult or offence to him of holy memory. But I leave this to the judgment of others. Be it as it may I am firmly determined, not only not to offend His Beatitude in any way, but to think day and night on what I can do to please him ; thus I trust that the joy and pleasure which the nomination of His Beatitude to the Pontificate caused me will endure for long, and I supplicate His Beatitude to accept me and my children and all that is mine as his humble sons and servants, and to preserve to us his grace, inasmuch as we shall make every effort to deserve his goodwill.

After this thou art to say to His Holiness that having thus recommended me, brotherly love constrains thee to recommend also Messer Giovanni, whom I have brought up as a priest, and endeavour to educate morally and intellectually in such a way that he should not be put to shame among others. All my hope in this matter is in His Beatitude who has already, out of his clemency and humanity, shown him some affection, and as we are in his good graces I entreat him to continue his benevolence, and to add to the other obligations our house has towards the Holy See by favouring this affair of Messer Giovanni ; strive with these and other words to recommend thy brother. I have now said enough about the Pope. Thou wilt have my

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letters to all the cardinals which thou wilt deliver or not according to Giovanni's directions. Commend me to them and say thou art come to Rome to express my devotion to Their Most Reverend Lords, and also in order that they may make acquaintance with him who will continue the devotion of our house towards them, and that they are to command thee and make use of thee as of all that is mine, offering thyself, &c. This thou wilt say to all in general, but to those on the marked list thou wilt say as follows.

To Cardinal Visconti say that even were he not a Cardinal, our house has old and innate obligations to all his illustrious house, and that as my son and by nature an ally of the Sforzas (Sforzesco), and a devoted servant of His Most Reverend Lordship thou beseechest him to command thee, and to treat thee as one of his house and accept thee as his servant, as are all of our house.

To Cardinal d'Aragona say that as I place all my hopes and trust in H.M. the King his father, it is thy duty as my son to present thyself to His Most Reverend Lordship, and that thou and my other sons, besides the many benefits received from H.M. the King, can never forget the honours paid to me at Naples and the mode of sending me home, and that thou art well aware what would have been thy condition and that of my other children, if things had gone differently. For this reason His Most Reverend Lordship and all the other sons of H.M. the King may sell thee, or pawn thee, and treat thee as a thing belonging to them.

To Cardinal Orsini say that I have sent thee to Rome for him to see how offshoots of their tree prosper in our soil and what fruit they bear, and that, such as they are, I send the first-fruit to His Most Reverend Lordship, and that although an unworthy son of the house of Orsini thou desirest, such as thou art, to be a servant of His Reverence, to whom as head of the house thou art willing and ready, during thy whole life as far thou canst, to repay the obligations thou art under to his noble

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house, which are indeed great, as thou owest thy being to it. For this reason thou art come to beg him as head, &c., to take thee under his care and to instruct thee, for thy honour and success will reflect upon him as much as upon me, thy father; commend to him Clarice and thy brothers and sisters, &c.

To the cardinals who are related to the Orsini, as I think are the Savelli, Conti, and Colonna, thou wilt make use of more familiar language than to the others, saying that besides other obligations I have towards them, we are, by the grace of God, related to their noble families, which I consider as one of the chief ornaments of our house. To Monsignore our Archbishop of Florence thou art to show all these instructions before making any visits, which on account of thine age may be very short ones. I hope that His Lordship, being better informed and more prudent, will add anything needful, assuring him that what I say is not merely formal but the truth, and do either more or less than his Lordship directs, as though it was I who told thee. At all events thou art to visit all the Orsini who are in Rome, speaking with due reverence, commending me to Their Lordships and offering thyself as their son and servant, they having deigned to become our relations by which thou art the chief gainer as being of higher birth, and therefore it is but right thou shouldst strive to repay them. I send thee with Giovanni Tornabuoni, whom thou art to obey in all things and not to presume to do aught without him. Be modest and kindly in manner towards him and every one, and strive to bear thyself with sedateness, all the more that sedateness is not a youthful virtue. The honours and flatteries that will be bestowed upon thee will be a great danger if thou art not discreet and rememberest who thou art. If Guglielmo [de' Pazzi] or his sons or grandsons come to see thee receive them kindly, but quietly, showing sorrow for their condition and encouraging them to act well and to hope for better things by so doing. Should Monsignore our Archbishop think it right for thee to go to any place outside Rome to visit any of the

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Orsini, thou canst do so ; obey His Lordship in this and in everything, as I have already said, as thou wouldst obey me. Tell Guglielmo that Bianca<sup>1</sup> having written in my name, and in that of Bernardo Rucellai, to ask him to give up the Canonry of Pisa to her for a certain exchange she wishes to make, he ought to do it, particularly as Bernardo offers to serve him and to help him in whatever way he thinks best. Impress this upon him.

NICCOLÒ MICHELOZZI to LORENZO DE' MEDICI at *Morba*

I send this horseman, not because the enclosed letters are of any great importance, but because all your people, both those of your house and your friends, wish to have news of you : though in all hope is great, yet the desire will only be appeased by news of you and of good results [from the baths]. Give orders therefore that your secretaries write often.

Antonio Tornabuoni informs me that this morning the Captain of infantry was sent to Romagna, we think he will do well what is necessary, and at Pietrasanta . . .<sup>2</sup> to fly from peril.

The Doge of Genoa writes that a safe-conduct for eight days has been given to Francesco Centurione, principally because some persons have an idea that he comes for a purpose and is not merely passing through. You will be the first to know whether he is the bearer of anything.

Sassetto tells me he has, by your orders, replied to the letter from Amaretto in Venice to you, and has told him to come here.

From the letters from Rome you will understand about the Pope, who has been trying to trick us.

Pier Filippo tells me that they intend to send a Commissary

<sup>1</sup> Bianca's sister, married to Guglielmo de' Pazzi

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to Pisa who can if necessary also act at Leghorn and at Pietrasanta, a man of resolution. They think of sending Piero di Lutozzo and of recalling Piero Capponi and Piero Vettori, who have both asked to be recalled, particularly Pier Capponi because Gino is not well; if you have any one else to suggest send word, for there is still time.

Alberghetto says he is ready to make those four small cannon for you if you will give him the materials; thus he will not lose his time on public things, in which he has been very ill-treated; they don't pay him, they give him no work, and they drive him to despair. I have helped him and shall do all I can for him.

Tell Madonna Clarice that Piero and all the other children are as well as ever I saw them, and I hope they will continue so. Do your best to recover and return soon quite cured and in good health, then everything else will go well.

On 'Change money is abundant for everywhere, save Lyons, for which place all the merchants are buyers, particularly those who used to be sellers. I think some one must be working to send supplies by some other channel. But I do not understand these things, or know whether it is true, still I think you ought to be informed of everything: if my news bores you, either tell me, or tell Ser Piero to open my letters and not to show them to you.

Do order them to write often to us. I commend myself to you.—In Florence the last day of the year 1484 (24th March 1485).

Ser Francesco sends you an abstract of what little there is of public matters.

NICCOLÒ MICHELOZZI.<sup>1</sup>

*Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza xxxix. No. 84.



# LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

MATTEO FRANCO to SER PIERO DOVIZI DA BIBBIENA,  
*Chancellor of Lorenzo de' Medici, wherever he  
may be*

*Salve, o alter ego.*

Good-bye Ser Piero, good-bye Franco, good-bye Lorenzo, Butti, Franceschi, good-bye, good-bye, &c. We parted at Capitulo near Bagno a Morba. Florence having quitted Pisa,<sup>1</sup> we came gaily singing and joking to the mill on this side of Monte Castelli, where we found twenty-five soldiers with shields and spears whom we had seen from above, when we said to one another, "Who are those fellows down there?" and we all shouted "*Palle, Palle*"; they replied, "*Palle, Palle e Orso, Orso*," and as we came nearer the shouts of *Palle* and *Orso* redoubled. We then saw they were men sent from Monte Castelli to escort us, &c. They wanted us to enter the townlet, but we declined, so they came with us down into the plain where was a crowd of women with faces as wrinkled as chestnut cakes, but all very merry and happy with tables spread out with wine, puff pastry, &c. We drank in haste, and keeping one of the soldiers as a guide discharged the others, and went on our journey singing and chatting gaily. Passing by deserted Monte Guidi, half-way down the hill we met a priest with his frock tucked up and so out of breath he might have come from Assisi, who said he was a friend of Donnino,<sup>2</sup> and implored us to dismount at his church and house, he was so exhausted and ran up and down so incessantly, that if he did not go and be bled I fear that by this time he is no more. God help him. We left, or rather we did not stop, and passed down below Casoli without entering, and about four miles this side of the village Martino Ghezo and Martino Moro caught us up, not having been able to keep

<sup>1</sup> Lorenzo and his wife were coming from Bagno a Morba; he went to Pisa, and she came home to Florence.

<sup>2</sup> A favourite groom of Lorenzo de' Medici, mentioned also in *La Caccia al Falcone*.



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up with us as we rode fast. They told us that on the other side of Casoli they met the so-much-longed-for Nannina<sup>1</sup> in a carriage, and that she asked about Lorenzo and Madonna Clarice. Hearing that Madonna Clarice had passed, and that Lorenzo had gone to Pisa, she was, they said, in despair, and showed great sorrow at not having seen Lorenzo, or even having been able to talk to Madonna Clarice. When Madonna heard this she several times lamented the bad luck of their missing each other, &c.

And thus, till about two miles from Colle di Val d'Elsa, we continued singing, joking, and talking. Then we became almost dumb, for nearly all our words migrated into a brother of Antonio del Pela who came to meet us, and conducted us into the tumbledown and ruined village of Colle to the house of the said Antonio. He came forward with such a river and flood of words that he drowned his brother, and us, and all who were near, and showed that he was truly the elder and the better brother. On entering the hall we found about thirty-five members of his family—girls, women, and children. My bore immediately began: "Madonna Clarice, this is my daughter, come forward, kiss the lady's hand; and this is my granddaughter, come forward, touch her gown. And this one, and this one. And these little ones are all my grandchildren; hold yourselves up, think of your manners; this one is to be a priest, this one a nun, to this one Madonna Lucrezia stood godmother, this one I have just given in marriage, this one makes Venetian fringe, that one lace." Plague take him. If I had not pulled him away he would have cast a spell on us all. But by asserting how tired Madonna Clarice and we all were I managed to damp his ardour. We arrived about twenty-two or twenty-three of the clock, and after resting we went to see paper made,<sup>2</sup> and returned to fetch Madonna Clarice, who thought

<sup>1</sup> Lorenzo de' Medici's sister, married to Bernardo Rucellai.

<sup>2</sup> Paper-mills were flourishing at Colle in the second half of the fifteenth century. See *Dizionario della Toscana*, E. Repetti, i. 758.

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it a pretty thing, and was much interested in the machines, the water, the air, &c. Then we went back and supped about one of the clock : a few wafers, cakes, and trebbiano,<sup>1</sup> salad and pickles, boiled fowl, and kid : and then young pigeons roasted, and I know not what preparation of fowl, marzipan, sweets, and comfits, &c.

Before supper the Commune of Colle made an offering to Madonna of corn, marzipan, wine, sweetmeats, &c., presented by eloquent orators, three out of the number. The substance was that as Lorenzo, whom they had expected, had not come, they presented all to her as being a second Lorenzo, with many excuses for the smallness of the gift owing to their poverty, and begged her to commend them and the town to Lorenzo. Madonna, by God, replied well and briefly, saying that they were not friends as they declared, for had they been they would have known that Lorenzo and herself would protect them without expecting gifts, which were rather things pertaining to strangers than to good friends. "On the one hand, you complain and ask me to represent to Lorenzo the poverty and the needs of yourselves and of your town, and then you spend money in these things. I take the will for the deed and give all back to you ; for if I kept them I should only give them to the town for the love of God, so I bestow them on you who are poorer than I." There was a great ado because they steadfastly refused to take the things away, alleging that there were plots against them, &c. Ser Giovanni Antonio and I sent them back by some of our people, keeping four flasks of wine and some marzipan to content them, and to show we wished them well.

We slept right well, and though Pela broke our heads with his idle chatter, I must say he received us with great courtesy and affection : and, after all, a good heart is to be admired more than other things.

In the evening after supper there appeared a certain Messer

<sup>1</sup> A much-prized white Tuscan wine.

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Ricco, an envoy from Siena, who remained with Madonna Clarice and Messer Giovanni Antonio for half-an-hour, talking about the rising at Siena. He said that Lorenzo had written that he was leaving Bagno with his wife, but did not say where he was going, so he thought to find him here. I know Ser Giovanni Antonio was satisfied with the report given by the envoy so I say no more.

Before leaving in the morning Messer Giovanni Antonio and I paid a visit to the Podestà. Then with a guide we came to Tavernelle and then to Passignano, where Donnino had preceded us; we reached there about fifteen of the clock. After resting awhile we dined: liver and lights, boiled kid, broad beans, curds and good wine, and then we visited the whole house, the church, and the relics. Madonna Clarice was more pleased than I can say with the house and with her room. There we stayed all day seeing different things. Our supper was salad, an excellent herb pie, fried curds, broad beans and cheese, &c.

In the morning, that is yesterday morning, we left directly after mass, coming by the S. Casciano road. Just under Fabrica a man galloped up, saying: "Your Piero sends me to find out by which road you are coming, for yester evening he came out several miles to meet you, and has now gone with Messer Giovanni and all the others towards S. Maria Impruneta." We replied that we were bound to S. Casciano. He flew off to bear the message, and at last on this side of S. Casciano, as we were crossing the river, we met Jacopo Salviati and his friend Tommasino de' Corbinelli, who greeted us with great joy, and rode back with us. Then near the Certosa we met paradise full of festive and joyous angels, that is to say, Messer Giovanni and Piero, and Giuliano and Giulio on pillions, with all their attendants. As soon as they saw their mother they threw themselves from their horses, some without help, others aided by their people, and they ran forward and were lifted into the arms of Madonna Clarice, with such joy and kisses and delight

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that a hundred letters could not describe it. Even I could not restrain myself but got off my horse, and ere they remounted I embraced them all twice; once for myself and once for Lorenzo. Darling little Giuliano said, with a long O, O, O, "Where is Lorenzo?" We said, "He has gone to Poggio to find you." Then he: "O no, never," almost in tears. You never beheld so touching a sight. He and Piero, who has become a beautiful lad, the prettiest thing, by God, you ever saw, somewhat grown, with the profile of an angel, and rather long hair which stands out a little and is charming to see. Giuliano, red and fresh as a rose, smooth, clear, and bright as a mirror, joyous and with those contemplative eyes. Messer Giovanni also looks well, not much colour, but healthy and natural; and Giulio has a brown and healthy complexion.<sup>1</sup> All, in short, were happiness itself. And thus with great joy and delight we went a happy party by Via Maggio, Ponte a S. Trinità, S. Michele Berteldi, S. Maria Maggiore, Canto alla Paglia, Via de' Martelli, and entered the house, *per infinita asecula aseculorum ex libera nos a malo amen*. I then rode to my own house, and I have not seen them since as I found many things to do. Nothing more.

Luigi left Florence this morning and went to Calcione or Balcone or whatever his place is called, and his wife is in Florence. Tell Francesco di Maestro Antonio,<sup>2</sup> my beloved and beautiful, that he had his letter, was much pleased by it, and says he will reply by word of mouth, as there was nought in it of moment he did not answer, but begs him to forgive him, he will do it better in person. Take note of this.

To my Andrea de' Medici commend me with all thy might and tell him not to forget my sea-shells. And come

<sup>1</sup> The two future Popes, Leo X. and Clement VII. Giulio was the illegitimate son of Giuliano, Lorenzo's brother, murdered in the Pazzi conspiracy. Lorenzo's second son, Giovanni, destined for the Church, had received the tonsure at seven years old, and was always spoken of as Messer Giovanni.

<sup>2</sup> The Squarcialupi, surnamed degli Organi, great musicians of the fifteenth century.

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back soon for the people can no longer retain their impatience. In haste.—May 12, 1485. FRANCO.

I gave thy garter to the man thou toldest me. I quite understand that he has not pleased the person who you said praised him: so that what with this and our conversation in the fields I think it would be an excellent thing to do as we decided. By word of mouth we will settle all. *Vale iterum.*

Say to Francesco that I went to his house and told his old woman that he was well and would be at Poggio on Monday, at which she rejoiced. I also went to the house of my Andrea de' Medici: his womankind were at vespers, but I saw the baby girl who was being fed; the sweetest little fish in the world, she looks like a rose: and I left word that he was well and would return on Monday. Commend me to him.

### *Two of Piero's Sayings*

Returning from the festival at the Carmine together we passed my house, so he came in and had some breakfast, and when we left as he was putting on his *catelano* [overcoat] I said: "Piero, will you not drink a little more?" When his coat was well on he said: "Yes, just a little so as not to smell of Catelano,"<sup>1</sup> which made us all laugh. The other: Passing near S. Maria Novella the house of that Ser Francesco who kept a school for boys, and seeing that now a carpenter was standing at the door which was open so that we could see wood piled up inside, I said: "Oh dear, Ser Francesco who kept the school must be dead," and the carpenter answered that he was. I exclaimed: "The devil! I am grieved for him!" Piero said: "Why 'the devil'? did you wish him to live more years than a life? He must have been eighty."

<sup>1</sup> The boy's play upon words is not easy to understand, it may mean a Catalonian.



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We laughed all the way to Piazza Madonna. I thought he had heard this and only repeated it, but looking at him I saw by his laughing face that he had said it of himself and on purpose.

Lorenzo declares (and it makes me laugh) that he will not have Piero bothered, &c. ; the poor lad cannot go outside the door without all Florence running after him ; it is the same at home, they all try to make him shine, though with decorum, on which he insists. But they don't care. It is of no use ; they are all enthusiastic and cannot hold their tongues. When Lorenzo goes out he will have to lock the boy in a cupboard if he does not want to hear questions put to him to answer. I cannot tell you what charm there is about him, so that all who talk for a while with him are captivated.<sup>1</sup>

### LORENZO DE' MEDICI to the DUKE ERCOLE D'ESTE

*Illme. Domine mi,*—Your Excellency has in your library a book by an historian named Dione, *de Romanis historiis*, which I have an extreme desire to see, both on account of the consolation I derive from history and also because my son Piero, who has some knowledge of Greek literature, has begged me to get this book for him to read, which I understand is very rare in Italy.<sup>2</sup> Your Excellency can understand how grateful I shall be for the loan of it for a few days, and therefore I beg you to grant my request and with all eagerness I expect the

<sup>1</sup> *Un Viaggio di Clarice Orsini de' Medici*, &c., Scelta di Curiosità Letterarie inedite o rare, Gaetano Romagnoli. Bologna, 1868.

<sup>2</sup> This codex had belonged to Battista Guarino and was highly valued and jealously guarded. The Duke refused to send it to Florence but allowed Lorenzo to have it copied by a Greek scribe he sent to Ferrara. Three years later Lorenzo asked the Duke to lend for a few days the translation of the book by Dione Cassio (Dionysius Cassius) made for the Duke by Niccolò Leonicensio. Again afraid to trust the manuscript out of his hands, he had a copy made in all haste by divers scribes, and sent it as a present to Lorenzo, on the condition that he was neither to lend it nor to allow it to be published. The translation was printed for the first time in Venice in 1532, the Greek original in Paris in 1548.



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book. I commend myself to Your Excellency.—Florence,  
February 5, 1485 (1486). Your Excellency's servant,

LAURENTIUS DE MEDICIS.<sup>1</sup>

Lorenzo not only borrowed but lent books in liberal fashion. Poliziano was his librarian with a certain Meo *cartolaio* as his assistant, who bound the manuscripts. Poliziano himself, Pico della Mirandola, Messer Demetrio the Greek (Chalcondylas), John Lascaris, and Bernardo Michelozzi, afterwards Bishop of Forlì, were among the most frequent borrowers, and every book taken out of the library, even by Lorenzo or his sons, was noted down in his *Epistolario*. Not only books, but arms, silver dishes, bowls, goblets, salt-cellar, spoons, and forks, were lent to various Podestà and to friends, even the Signoria of Florence occasionally borrowed from him. The silver Lorenzo took with him on hunting excursions or to the various baths he visited was carefully recorded.

MESSER GUIDONE ALDROVANDINI, *Ambassador to the  
Republic of Florence from Ferrara, to DUKE  
ERCOLE D'ESTE*

Yesterday evening at one of the night the Magnificent Lorenzo returned and to-day I went to see him. His Magnificence said that during these few days of absence he found that Milan had made observations about the Signoria having despatched Ugolino Baccio, a private gentleman of no official standing, to the Illustrious Duke of Calabria without notifying the fact to the government of Milan; and that it seemed to him that Milan and the Lord Lodovico did not remember that this city called herself the city of liberty, and that she would be indeed in evil plight if she could not send a man wherever she chose without the permission of Milan, particularly when despatched to the Duke of Calabria. Also that this city made no remark when the Lord Lodovico made a

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere*, &c., Arch. Palatina di Modena, *op. cit.*

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treaty with Venice without informing this Signoria . . . all these things showed a rancorous and evil disposition. . . . That if Milan ever needed help from here . . . and in desperate need turned to this people . . . it would be impossible to persuade them to listen to her request. He said that Villa was of no value to Milan, while to this Signoria the place was of great importance, for if they lose hold of that district and were at war with Genoa, instead of spending ten they would have to spend sixty and even more. . . . He could not understand whence arose the hatred shown by Milan to this Signoria and the explosion of rage at the acquisition of a place of no importance. This Signoria did not act thus towards Milan, nor towards the Marquis of Mantua, nor towards Your Lordship; they have always aided, and spent much treasure in trying to help all these princes to enrich themselves at the expense of Venice. If this did not succeed it was not the fault of this Signoria, who did all they could to aid in the matter. It therefore seems strange to them that there should be such grumbling about Villa. I then touched upon what Your Excellency wrote to me. That it was not thought that Milan would again demand the restitution of Villa but would wait until this Signoria decided upon attacking Sarzana, when Villa would naturally fall to them. . . . His Magnificence replied: "I will tell you all openly, only beg Your Lord to keep it secret. This you must know has been thought of, but this city is not inclined to undertake the enterprise of Sarzana during the next few years, but to temporise until our affairs are more prosperous, for we are quite aware that the Lord Lodovico has made an alliance with Genoa, and that we could not count on help from him. The Lord Lodovico shows that he does not understand the spirit that rules this city, which is this: When we have embarked on an enterprise we continue with ardour, when we are at peace it needs a great effort to make us undertake one. Now that the Signoria has sheathed the sword it will not unsheath it, save for very grave reasons.

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We know that 60,000 ducats would not suffice for an attempt on Sarzana." . . . November 4, 1486.<sup>1</sup>

DUKE ERCOLE D'ESTE to MESSER ALDROVANDINI, *Ambassador of Ferrara to the Republic of Florence*

MESSER ALDROVANDINI,—As soon as you receive this our letter contrive to see the Magnificent Lorenzo *solus cum solo*, and inform him most secretly that we are advised by our ambassador at Venice that a Genoese envoy has arrived there in disguise, with secret instructions from his prince, and his ambassador has asked that Illustrious Signoria to enter into a treaty, and to give counsel and aid against the Magnificent Signoria of Florence. Not desiring to make this public, but on the contrary to keep it secret, they requested the Illustrious Signoria of Venice to let Signor Roberto [San Severino] enter his service, to whom his Commune offers 20,000 men for making war against the Florentines. He complained that the Illustrious Lord Lodovico kept his ambassadors some time in Milan and sent them home without concluding anything, on the pretext that he wanted to reconcile them with the Florentines, towards whom they say he is too tender. It has been determined not to give an immediate answer to this envoy but to keep him amused with hopes until it is known whether the league and friendship which is now being arranged between the Pope and the Signoria is concluded. To accelerate this the Signoria of Venice have sent Antonio Vinciguerra their secretary in all haste to Rome, who passed through here three nights ago on his way to Ravenna, where horses were ready to take him to Rome. With him went a secretary of the Legate, who is at Venice, sent by the Legate, so that by what we see and hear the affair is on the point of being concluded unless steps can be taken to stop it. Of the important results to Italian

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere e Notizie*, Arch. Pal. di Modena, *op. cit.*

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matters, *et presentim* to our Illustrious League, I leave the Magnificent Lorenzo to judge. I beg you *ex corde* to keep this news secret, for if by chance it was known from whence it came, besides the danger our ambassador at Venice would run, you would lose the benefit of being advised of matters which deeply concern that Illustrious Signoria and His Magnificence.—  
Ferrara, November 18, 1486.<sup>1</sup>

MESSER GUIDONE ALDROVANDINI, *Ambassador of  
Ferrara to the Republic of Florence, to the DUKE  
ERCOLE D'ESTE*

This evening about 24 of the clock came the letter of Your Illustrious Lordship. I went at once to the Magnificent Lorenzo and read him the whole letter, entreating him in Your Excellency's name to keep it absolutely secret. When His Magnificence heard it I assure Your Lordship that he remained for a time without opening his lips from agony and rage, and then said: "I believe all that is evil of this Pope, the more so that to-day I heard from Rome that S. Piero in Vincula is going to Padua on the pretence of fulfilling a vow, but really in order to conclude a league with the Venetians and settle everything." Then he added: "This ecclesiastical State has always been the ruin of Italy, because being ignorant and not knowing how to govern, the priests put the whole world in peril. If His Majesty puts an end to the Barons, he will then teach the Pope to read." About the news that Signor Roberto was to lead the Genoese against him, &c., he did not seem to care much, or to hold them in much estimation, saying that they would need other men than the crews of galleys. He then said: "If Signor Roberto is to be the instrument of this it is not serious." By these words I gathered that His Magnificence did not greatly fear Signor Roberto on account of the

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 291.

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friendship existing between them and that he meant, according to my poor judgment, that Signor Roberto would not make war on Florence; though he did not express himself clearly.—Florence, November 20, 1486.<sup>1</sup>

LORENZO DE' MEDICI to UGOLINO BACCIO in *Apulia*  
To BACCIO.

I have yours of the 18th, 22nd, and 29th, and now answer what is most important. As to the understanding between the Pope and the King I have no fear that it will cause me trouble; for if I thought the King did not understand the difference between one who has seriously offended him and one who has aided him with all his might, I should not have advised this city to help him. The confirmation of the custom we have adopted of making princes of the relatives of Popes displeases me, because I have experienced the evils it gives rise to, and know that the more esteem one shows for others the less is shown to oneself, and that one example entails others. I have come to the conclusion that a union between Milan, ourselves, and the house of Orsini would be to our advantage and to theirs, and anything that indicates greater faith in others than in us weakens this bond. But as the Lord Virginio [Orsini] is of a different opinion I give way, particularly as Messer Gianjacopo [Trivulzio, Sforza's general], who is as prudent and expert as Papi Tani, is of his way of thinking. I do not however repent of having spoken fully and openly about this, unless the King or the Duke have taken offence, in which case I had rather have bitten my tongue.

As to the other part of your letter in which you say you have heard from Milan that the Duke has been told I am displeased at his seeking to protect himself and obtain a following, it is false, and no man who speaks the truth can say it. Give the Duke to understand that if I believed that

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere e Notizie*, &c., Arch. Pal. di Modena, *op. cit.*



## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

the frauds and lies of others would find credence with His Excellency as against my actions, I think I should go and live with the Turk. The proof of what my desire has been is that I always counselled the Duke by letter, and in person at Citerna, to take Colonessi into his service, and persuaded the Lord Virginio that this was the proper thing. It appears to me unnecessary to make excuses, as it might give rise to the idea that I was in fault, of which I am as free as the day I was born. I am I think known as an upright man and loyal, and one to be trusted by the Duke as fully as any man alive for sincerity and a complete lack of prejudice. What I have done to aid him was done without any design of benefiting the State or myself, of my own free will and reason. He will see that I shall not trouble him much or reproach him every hour as will probably be done by others. If I have asked him for anything, as for example San Germano, I can truly say it was rather offered to me than asked for, and whether I get it or not, I shall continue the same line of conduct without any feeling of anger, because I was actuated by higher motives which still affect me. Messer Gianjacopo would do well to send you the Brief which he mentioned to Pier Capponi as having already arrived, and which creates more difficulties; and he would have done still better not to tell the Pope the intentions of others with regard to the negotiations for peace. I had given no authority to any one, and am more than content that love and peace reigns between the King and the Lord Lodovico: for if a good understanding does not exist between us peril and great loss will ensue. I never consider that any good will come to me from harm done to others. Perhaps some day God will open the eyes of all wider. I am glad your expedition meets with the approval of the person you mention, I will arrange that you shall find there any news I can give. But as the Pope appears ill-disposed I have small faith in anything that depends on him.

I am very glad that the Count's affairs at Citerna have been arranged not only to his satisfaction but in a way honourable to



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myself. Thank Virginio [Orsini] heartily from me, to whom we owe this. And as I understand he has arranged the affairs and interests of all the family except those of Organtino [Orsini, Clarice's eldest brother] entreat him particularly also to arrange Organtino's satisfactorily, making him understand that I regard the affairs of His Holiness as being my own. For the love of God, Baccio, bestir yourself with all your might in this matter, I am most anxious about it, particularly for love of Clarice. I long for peace at home as I see small reason to hope for it abroad.—December 3, 1486.<sup>1</sup>

MESSER GUIDONE ALDROVANDINI, *Ambassador from Ferrara to the Florentine Republic, to the DUKE ERCOLE D'ESTE*

... Milan has written the most amiable letters to this Illustrious Signoria about the affair of Sarzana, saying that they will expose their State and their persons if necessary in the service of Florence. These letters are explained by Milan having heard of the league between the Pope and the Venetians, and finding that she cannot draw the Pope on her side as she thought, she now tries to make friends here. The Illustrious Lodovico has also written a most loving letter to the Magnificent Lorenzo, saying that they have both erred, and suggesting that the past be set aside and a clean page begun; when the Magnificent Lorenzo will see that he will be a true and good brother; and that he will not believe the past has been forgotten unless some great service is demanded of him. These letters have been most acceptable to the Magnificent Lorenzo. . . .—Florence, December 10, 1486.<sup>2</sup>

... Sarzana is being bombarded day and night by the Florentine troops, and it is hoped that S. Francesco will be

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza xliii. No. 176.

<sup>2</sup> *Lettere e Notizie*, &c., Arch. Pal. di Modena, *op. cit.*

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theirs in two days, when Sarzana must fall. Some soldiers and officers have fled from the town and say the inhabitants are in great straits and have begun to eat the army biscuits, and that Messer Ettore Dal Fiesco, the commissary, is hated for his extreme cruelty. Two of the mortars of this Illustrious Signoria have burst. The Magnificent Lorenzo is at Pisa urging on the capture of Sarzana; he has sent the big mortar from Pisa, and pioneers in haste to the camp, whom he paid in advance as otherwise none would go. . . .—Florence, June 7, 1487.<sup>1</sup>

The Magnificent Lorenzo has gone himself to the camp before Sarzana to push on matters. S. Francesco has fallen. . . .—Florence, June 9, 1487.<sup>2</sup>

The Magnificent Lorenzo arrived here on the vigil of S. Giovanni (23rd June) and was received with more joy and caresses by the people than I can describe, as they say they owe the taking of Sarzana to him more than to others. . . .—Florence, June 26, 1487.

. . . The Magnificent Lorenzo said bitter words to me about the Illustrious Signor Lodovico (il Moro), particularly as to the withdrawal of his troops *ex abrupto* from the camp (before Sarzana), saying the Signor Lodovico was so puffed up that he fancied the Genoese would give him Castelletto and Genoa, but that time would teach him better. . . .—Florence, June 28, 1487.<sup>3</sup>

. . . I again tried to persuade the Magnificent Lorenzo that he would do well and wisely to let Your Highness try and dissipate this misunderstanding between the Illustrious Messer Lodovico and His Magnificence, and that I was sure Your Highness would be able to arrange matters so that they would be greater friends than before. His Magnificence was greatly perturbed and said Your Highness was in a position to know how justified were the complaints of this Signoria against the Signor Lodovico and then turned his back on me. I attempted

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

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to ask him what this meant but in vain : he would not answer. I confess I do not know what to infer from this. If Your Excellency understands, so much the better. A friend told me that at home His Magnificence talks like a desperate man, and says that he would like to go for six months to some place where Italian affairs would never be mentioned, and that your Excellency cannot imagine what joy His Magnificence showed at the victory gained by the King of France, and openly said he hoped to see the King master of all Italy. From this one can only conceive that His Magnificence is very irate. God turn his heart to act well. . . .—Florence, July 7, 1487.<sup>1</sup>

. . . The Magnificent Lorenzo continues to be desperately angry with the Illustrious Messer Lodovico. . . . He spoke most terrible and desperate words saying that Messer Lodovico was doing all he could to make the Pope and the Florentines throw themselves at the feet of H.M. the King, and that this should be done ; that as Messer Lodovico wished Italian affairs to go to the bad His Magnificence would aid and abet him, &c. What will happen I know not, but I do know that if he were to act wisely they would come to some good understanding as did his forefathers, and as Your Highness has told him several times. His Magnificence sent off special messengers yester eve to Rome and to Milan. May God guide this business to a good end, for to me it seems that evil passions are rising here every day. . . .—Florence, July 18, 1487.<sup>2</sup>

DUKE ERCOLE D'ESTE to MESSER ALDROVANDINI, *Ambassador of Ferrara to the Florentine Republic*

. . . You are informed that the Illustrious Messer Lodovico [il Moro] is ill ; it seems he is afflicted with certain pains in the stomach which give him great suffering. Therefore many friends of his and of ours at Milan who are anxious about his

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere e Notizie*, &c., Arch. Pal. di Modena, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

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health, have entreated us to beg the Magnificent Lorenzo to send a certain Maestro Pietro Leoni, an excellent doctor who is at Florence, to Milan, a man of great knowledge who may perhaps cure this malady.<sup>1</sup> We therefore desire that as soon as you receive this you go to the Magnificent Lorenzo and in our name beg him as heartily as you can, for love of us and for the interest we believe he takes in the health of the Illustrious Lodovico, to send the said Maestro Pietro immediately to Milan.—Ferrara, August 31, 1487.<sup>2</sup>

MESSER GUIDONE ALDROVANDINI, *Ambassador of Ferrara to the Republic of Florence, to DUKE ERCOLE D'ESTE*

. . . I hear from a good source that Messer Giovanni Jacopo de' Trivulzi has been commissioned by the Pope to tell the Magnificent Lorenzo that he only sleeps with the eyes of the said Magnificent Lorenzo, that he must advise him, the Pontiff, wisely and guide him; if he does so the gain and the honour will be his; but if his advice be bad it will lead to the ruin of both. The Pope complains as high as the third heaven of the King's conduct to him.<sup>3</sup> At the same time Messer Jacopo speaks of the cowardice, misery, and sadness of the Pope, as one speaks about a blackguard, and says that if he be not encouraged and helped to keep up his spirits, he will sink lower than any coward ever sank. To-day comes news that the King has appealed *ad novum Concilium contra Pontificem* on account of his behaviour to H.M. This will I believe frighten the Pope, for he is a very rabbit. . . .—Florence, September 6, 1487.<sup>4</sup>

. . . The Pope says the King cannot appeal because at

<sup>1</sup> Pietro Leoni was Lorenzo de' Medici's physician, and either drowned himself or was thrown into a well near Careggi when Lorenzo died.

<sup>2</sup> *Lettere e Notizie*, &c., Arch. Pal. di Modena, *op. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> Ferdinand, or Ferrante, King of Naples.

<sup>4</sup> *Lettere e Notizie*, &c., Arch. Pal. di Modena, *op. cit.*

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Mantua, when the Diet assembled in the time of Pope Pius, all the Italian princes promised never to appeal *ad futurum Concilium*. Item that H.M. expressly promised Pope Sixtus not to appeal, &c. For these reasons His Sanctity declares that he can proceed against the King. But I think he will be cautious.—Florence, September 12, 1487.<sup>1</sup>

. . . H.M. the King and the Duke of Calabria<sup>2</sup> declare that neither through the King of Castile, or through Milan or Florence, have they ever given a promise to pay tribute to the Pope. Here this declaration is laughed to scorn as being made by cunning evildoers, *cum sit* that Milan and Florence made the promise and the agreement was signed with the Pope, so H.M. will have to pay the tribute. However like wise men the Signori of Florence have resolved to ignore the arrogant message of the King and the Duke, and to drink this bitter cup. . . .—Florence, November 7. 1487.<sup>3</sup>

. . . To-day at 22 of the clock Messer Ascanio with fourteen horsemen passed through here in disguise, riding hard by post to Milan. It appears he has been summoned by the Milanese nobles because the death of Messer Lodovico is expected. The Magnificent Lorenzo and the Milanese ambassador saw His Excellency, but no one else as it was kept secret and he did not enter the city. . . . Should Messer Lodovico die the Magnificent Lorenzo will aid Messer Ascanio in every way to become Lord of Milan. Some time ago he was of a different mind, but now he will do everything to turn matters in the Pope's favour and against H.M. the King. . . . From a friend I learn that the Duke of Lorraine has just been here in disguise and has seen the Magnificent Lorenzo at night, who at once sent him on to the Pope.—Florence, November 18, 1487.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere e Notizie*, &c., Arch. Pal. di Modena, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Alfonso, son of the King of Naples.

<sup>3</sup> *Lettere e Notizie*, &c., Arch. Pal. di Modena, *op. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*



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LORENZO DE' MEDICI to INNOCENT VIII.

*Sanctissime, ac Beattissime Pater post Pedum oscula Beatorum Vestorum*,—From our ambassador I hear that Your Holiness has seen fit to suspend the affair of Nantes, and to defer granting the request to the King of France. Although I must acquiesce in every decision of Your Holiness, yet the reasons Your Holiness gives for delay cause me to write again; for if the Most Christian King obtains his desire he will be even more beholden to Your Sanctity, while my condition and reputation will be enhanced. I am sure if Your Holiness knew the help and the utility this would be to me, this business would not be deferred, particularly as the King has in general no need of my services, and such an occasion as the present comes but seldom. If the love Your Holiness bears me is not shown in great matters, it will be ill seen in small. With all humility therefore I beseech Your Holiness to deign to grant me one of the greatest boons I could receive, and to do a pleasure to H.M. the King. A pleasure which will be much esteemed by H.M., and be most honourable and useful to me. There will be no difficulty in it, and it cannot be unbecoming in Your Holiness to satisfy the desire of so great a King, who is so well-deserving *de Ecclesia Dei*, and at the same time to content me, Your humble and devoted servant, who humbly commends himself at Your Holy Feet.—Florence, December 8, 1487.  
*Humilis servitor,* LAURENTIUS DE' MEDICIS.<sup>1</sup>

MESSER ALDROVANDINI, *Ambassador from Ferrara to the Florentine Republic*, to DUKE ERCOLE D'ESTE

. . . The Pope has been much cheered by the assurances of the Venetian envoys, who openly say that their Signoria

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere di Lorenzo il Magnifico al Sommo Pontefice Innocenzo VIII.*, Canonico D. Moreni. Firenze, 1830.



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only hastened to make peace with the Germans, in order to come to the aid of His Sanctity and the honour of the Holy See . . . and to force His Majesty the King to keep the promises made to His Sanctity. . . . Milan has written here that she considers the King ought to be informed that should he fail to arrange matters with the Pope, and the Pope declares war, he is not to expect help from either Florence or Milan. . . . As yet these Signori have not come to any decision, but I think they will join Milan in this. . . . As to the Venetians I do not believe they would bother themselves with such an enterprise, unless they saw a chance of gaining something in addition to the hatred they bear the King. . . .—Florence, December 18, 1487.<sup>1</sup>

. . . The Magnificent Lorenzo is of opinion that the Pope should rather be held back than pushed forward, and that the King should not be irritated, thus His Magnificence thinks we might have peace and quiet, if the contrary is done he fears that disaster will ensue. . . . The Magnificent Lorenzo is extremely discontented with the Pope's behaviour, and thinks he shows greater folly every day and every hour, particularly if he insists in launching interdicts against the King . . . As to the letters written from Milan, which I mentioned in mine of the 18th, the answer was that as allies they could only applaud the idea of letting the King know that they desired to stand well with the Pope, &c. The reply was airy: they did not desire to be explicit.

From a friend I learn that the Magnificent Lorenzo spoke in different terms to the Milanese ambassador, saying, that as Messer Lodovico's condition prevents him from attending to business, it seems to him unwise to irritate the King, particularly as H.M. has everything ready and is prepared for war, while the Pope is without troops and with small brains, has bad advisers, and all the Roman Barons against him. The worst of all being that neither the Pope, nor Milan, nor

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere e Notizie*, &c., Arch. Pal. di Modena, *op. cit.*

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Florence, have any commander if they wished to go to war, &c. . . .—Florence, December 28, 1487.<sup>1</sup>

. . . The Magnificent Lorenzo is of opinion that the acts of the Pope will be worse than his words. The ambassadors of the League have arranged with His Sanctity that Imola and Forlì should go to the Count's sons,<sup>2</sup> but the Magnificent Lorenzo believes that from what he hears the children have been poisoned. In this case the Pope has every claim on that State as being Church property and the Lords invested by the Church being dead . . . His Magnificence would far rather see Forlì and Imola in private hands than in those of a powerful prince. But if they are to belong to a potentate he had rather it should be Milan than the Church; for Milan has several Baronies, and might bestow the State on some lord, as did Duke Galeazzo, but the Church would never do so, as for some time she has been a sworn enemy to the Barons and the Lords, and whatever she seizes she holds. Also the rule of the Church is so admirable that it does harm to its neighbours! And although I argued with him to see whether these were his real convictions he remained staunch, saying that the time would come when the Church would be more dangerous than the Signoria of Venice, and that this belief more than anything else induced him to favour H.M. the King [of Naples]. . . .—Florence, April 25, 1488.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Count Girolamo Riario, nephew of the late Pope Sixtus, cruel and despotic, had been murdered by his subjects, and his wife Caterina, an illegitimate daughter of Galeazzo Sforza, taken prisoner with her three sons. The castle of Ravaldino which commanded the town still held out, and the insurgents allowed her to go to the commandant on the pretence that she would induce him to surrender, leaving her children as hostages in their hands. Once inside the castle she defied the people, and when they threatened to kill her children replied, according to Guicciardini, "Are you not fools, cannot you see that I can have others?" Milanese troops were sent by Lodovico Sforza and the little boys were saved.

<sup>3</sup> *Lettere e Notizie*, &c., Arch. Pal. di Modena, *op. cit.*

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AGNOLO POLIZIANO to LORENZO DE' MEDICI

*Magnifice Domine mi*,—We arrived safely at Acquapendente yester evening at 8 o'clock, I wrote to you also from Montepulciano. To-morrow we leave for Viterbo. We are all in high spirits and find good cheer, and all along the road we pick up new tunes and May songs, which seem to me more original here than elsewhere, *alla Romanesca, vel nota ipsa vel argumento*. I commend myself to Your Magnificence.—Acquapendente, May 2, 1488. Your Magnificence's servant,  
ANG. POLITIANUS.<sup>1</sup>

Poliziano accompanied Piero de' Medici to Rome to meet his bride Alfonsina Orsini, to whom he had been married by proxy at Naples in February the year before. His mother Clarice, who was very ill, had been in Rome since November hoping, as consumptive people do, that the milder air would cure her. With her had gone her favourite daughter, "the eye of her head," Maddalena, affianced to the Pope's illegitimate son Francesco Cibò. Piero and his wife, Clarice and Maddalena, all returned together to Florence, Lorenzo having begged the Pope and Cibò to allow Maddalena to come with her sick mother. With her, when she went to Rome, he had sent Matteo Franco, "one of the dearest creatures of my house," he calls him, to keep the young girl company, and to look after her. How well the humorous, kindly priest fulfilled his trust, how cordially he disliked both Genoese and Romans, and how he longed for the brilliant society of the Medici palace is shown in the following letter. Cibò, a gambler, ignorant and stupid, had sense enough to recognise how invaluable Franco was, and although he raised no objection to Maddalena's going with her mother, he refused to part with Franco.

<sup>1</sup> *Prose Volgari inedite, &c., op. cit.* p. 74.

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MATTEO FRANCO, *from Stigliano, to SER PIERO DOVIZI  
DA BABBIEA, Chancellor to Lorenzo de' Medici, at  
Florence*

O revered, sweet, and good brother mine, where art thou at this moment? what art thou doing? art thou well? Hast thou so soon forgotten thy Franco who eating or sleeping only dreams of his dear soul Ser Piero? This I will never believe, far rather would I imagine that thou art hurt because I have written so seldom; that thou art sorry because I am not near thee, thy companions and affairs; and above all that thou art sorry because thou dost not see the expected fruit of thy kind and loving sowing, of thy many heartfelt letters in my favour, of all the kind things said about me to my lord and of thy expectation founded on the esteem and love thou bearest me. All this gladdens and yet distresses me; gladdens me because I rejoice in possessing so good and true a friend; distresses me when I think that all thy trouble has been in vain by no fault of mine. But, sweet Ser Piero, do not lose faith in me, as I do not lose it in thee, good will come of it all.

Thou must know that till now we have come out of all with honour, *id est* thy Franco, as Franco, towards his masters, towards thee, and towards himself, has done well despite of malignant, venomous and treacherous, envious, &c. I came, and on the road and whilst in Rome, with all the love and economy I was able to employ was so useful to my masters that they showed their appreciation by words and deeds many times; particularly when I stood aloof and they tried others. Of the money received by me for the expenses, my enemies twice carefully dissected, like anatomists, my accounts, shop by shop, day by day, entry by entry; and everything was in such order that calumny had a fall, and they were laughed at and put to shame. Thus my affection, fidelity, and diligence were established and talked of publicly by them as I heard privately,

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so that I pardon all. When I made up the final balance only twenty-eight lire were missing, which must have been forgotten by the man who buys retail. This would be of small account if I had not lost so much in brains, soul, and body, instead of only twenty-eight lire, in all these devilries and persecutions, &c., so that I even once cursed both thee and Lorenzo who sent me into this hell. But God has helped us, for of a certain Lorenzo, thou, and my own good intentions, could not have a bad ending.

All this, my Ser Piero, must be a comfort to thee as it is to me. Also I cannot describe the kindness and love shown to me by Madonna Clarice, twice or thrice she even said that the Count showed small discretion in taking me from her, exclaiming: "See how I am left, I will not allow any man to have the spending of my money but Franco; and I will eat nothing but what has passed through his hands; we never intended to give Franco to him in order that he might be buried alive in a wood, he would be far more useful to Madonna Maddalena and to his house if he were here at hand, &c." She talked of this a hundred times and has already sent for me twice since I have been at these baths, and kept me two or three days until his Lordship drove me back to the baths.

It was rumoured that Maddalena was to go to Florence with Alfonsina and a list was drawn up of things she was going to ask of the Count for her journey; among others she desired:

"As chaplain I wish for Franco.

"And some one to write my letters, for this Franco will be good.

"And I should like Your Excellency's necklace for the time I am in Florence, and such a dress and such footmen, &c., if it please you, &c." The list was given to my lord in the evening and after reading it he replied: "All thou askest I give thee willingly, save only Franco and my necklace." The girl replied: "Madonna Clarice desires that he should come." "And I desire that he should stay. They have nought more



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to do with Franco once Lorenzo has given him to thee, and I desire that thou leavest him to look after thy interests for the income of the baths I intend for thee. Thou seest how I am robbed by all. He has done more in the fifteen days he has been there than all my other people since I had Cervetri."

These words were repeated to me by my angel mistress and lady, who has doubtless wept more than once with Madonna Baccia over my coming to stay here, for Madonna Baccia writes that she talks of me and calls me every hour. Were it not for this and for the thought of him there, who is my soul and my heart, of whom I think in all my tribulations so that by the true God, Ser Piero, melancholy then flies from me and my heart is so consoled that my soul is kept in my body. Otherwise I should have died a hundred times. Enough. I might go on and tell that every day I hear how my lord praises me, and I hope from these baths to get great honour, &c., and a hundred other expectations from friends and models made in Rome. But as I do not want to break thy head I skip: enough that I have let off a little bile; I wanted to tell thee something about my life. I have been here at the baths of Stigliano since March 12th, saving the few days Madonna Clarice sent for me as I said; and have already arranged the baths Tuscan fashion. The rooms are disgusting, Bagno a Morba is a Careggi in comparison; the air is accursed, the men are like Turks; everything as bad as can be. Day and night I have to struggle with *bravi*, with soldiers, with swindlers, with venomous dogs, with lepers, with Jews, with madmen, with thieves, and with Romans. Now I run to the cook, now to the baker, then to the tavern, then to clients in the inns; then I argue with the discontented, with the sick in the hospital, then with the pedlar, then with the grocer, then with the chemist; then I go to the washerwoman, then to the grooms, then to the courier, then to the doctor, then to the priest. For I have transported all these people here; there were but bare walls and only half of them standing. In short I have had to bring



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from the smallest to the largest thing which may be needful for perhaps ten thousand people into this forest, so that every man may have, by paying, every convenience he wants. And I am alone to manage all. During this month of May never a day has passed but there have been a hundred or a hundred and fifty persons ; rooms, beds, even the courtyard, all are full, and some days there have been more than three hundred. Most of them stay three days and then go ; and I have to receive them all, to see to their food, to provide what they want and have not brought with them, grass, oats, hay, in short, everything. For all this they have to pay me, so I hope to glean more than four hundred ducats for Madonna Maddalena if God gives me health. With cooks, innkeepers, bakers and so on, I have about twenty-five men in my pay ; and if you could see your Franco in this tempest and purgatory and whirl, host of this great inn of the devil, by God you would pity him. They comfort me by saying that Christ must wish me well if I escape without a beating, a knife in my ribs, a quarrel, or an illness, for no one has ever returned whole from here, God be praised for His mercies. Yet I am of good cheer and have such faith in my fair dealing that I hope to do myself honour, if it pleases God. Till now I have pocketed about a hundred ducats, and all sorts and conditions of men have come. If I have not gained with the bad ones I have not lost ; most went away contented. From those of the better sort, couriers, gentlemen, and the like, I think I have gained affection and esteem, for since they returned to Rome they have written to me and sent me presents. Some day I hope to find a great joy, I even hope in the — of Lucifer the Great, serving for the love of God, of Lorenzo and of what is his. *Vale.*—May 6, 1488.

YOUR FRANCO, fighting at the Baths of Stigiliano.<sup>1</sup>

The rejoicings for Piero's marriage were suddenly turned to mourning. Lorenzo's second daughter Luisa, betrothed to her

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Stor. Ital.*, Serie terza, ix. 48, Parte I.

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cousin Giovanni, of the junior branch of the Medici, died at the age of sixteen, so bride and bridegroom went to Careggi without entering Florence. Early in June, however, a magnificent banquet was given in honour of Alfonsina, to which all the foreign ambassadors and the chief citizens of the city were invited. Soon afterwards arrived Francesco Cibò, and for the first time since the Pazzi conspiracy in 1478 the day of S. Giovanni (24th June) was again celebrated with great magnificence. The peasants flocked into Florence to see the Pope's son, husband of the gentle Maddalena, and the crowd saluted him with loud cries of "*Cibò e Palle.*" Serdonati's account of Lorenzo's home life, apropos of these festivities, is interesting.

"When in 1488 Francesco went to Florence to celebrate his marriage he took many knights and noble persons with him, the flower of the Roman nobility. He was received with great splendour and lodged with all his people right royally. But soon Lorenzo, taking pleasure in seeing his son-in-law familiarly, or perchance thinking to gain still more the Pope's benevolence, continually invited him to dine at his house without ceremony, or as we say *alla casalinga*. Now it appears that the Florentines are generally held to be chary of spending their money, so he thought that those gentlemen who had accompanied him to honour his wedding might be treated in like manner, and was sore troubled, fearing that the city of Florence and his relations would be held up to ridicule afterwards in Rome. Afraid to hear what he did not wish, he dared not ask how they fared. But one day a Roman gentleman who was intimate with him saw how full of thought he was and asked the reason. He answered that although he knew his father-in-law Lorenzo was a man of great reputation and worth, yet he felt mortified, because on account of the usage of the city or for some other reason his friends were treated in too homely a fashion. He was therefore pained, but it might be remedied by a speedy departure, and in Rome he would indemnify them for any discomforts or annoyances they had undergone. The cavalier, astonished, replied that had the

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Pope himself been lodged as they were he could not have complained, or been more magnificently entertained, cared for, served and honoured, and that no one could desire more. So delighted was Francesco to hear this that he could not contain himself and recounted all to his father-in-law, who with great urbanity replied that children, among whom he now reckoned Francesco, and strangers and noble persons, such as had accompanied him, were to be treated differently; the latter with all magnificence, partly for their own merits, partly out of respect for him and to do him honour; but that between him and his own children he had made no difference. This gave much pleasure and satisfaction to Francesco and greatly pleased the Pope when he heard of it, and all admired the wisdom and prudence of Lorenzo in all things both public and private."<sup>1</sup>

MESSER ALDROVANDINI, *Ambassador from Ferrara to the Florentine Republic, to the DUKE ERCOLE D'ESTE*

I have seen Pier Filippo Pandolfini twice, who is the heart of Lorenzo in the Council and the first citizen of Florence . . . to tell him according to your Excellency's instructions that we will do anything rather than break with Milan. He replied that they would never commit the error of breaking, but *etiam* that they would never consent to anything that would dishonour or disgrace this city. Florence, he said, is neither Cremona nor Pavia, which are subject to the State of Milan, and he thought Milan wished to treat the Florentines as though they were her subjects . . . and that now this Signoria [Florence] had reconquered Piancaldoli<sup>2</sup> they would never give it up.— Florence, May 15, 1488.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Vita e Fatti d'Innocenzo VIII.*, Scritta per Messer Francesco Serdonati, fiorentino, &c. Milano, Ferrario, 1829, 59 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Ten years before Girolamo Riario had taken Piancaldoli from Florence during the war between Sixtus and Lorenzo. Lodovico Sforza was furious at this success of the Florentine arms, but could do nothing.

<sup>3</sup> *Lettere e Notizie*, &c., Arch. Pal. di Modena, *op. cit.*

## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

. . . The Illustrious Signori Eight sent for me to-day; with them was the Magnificent Lorenzo and several citizens, and they told me the news from Faenza. The imprisonment of Messer Giovanni [Bentivoglio] and of Madonna, the death of Count Giampiero del Bergamino [Captain of the Milanese troops], and that the people insisted that the son of Messer Galeotto should be installed as their Lord under the protection of Florence. The Eight had already recalled their Commissary who had been sent to Castrocara and he had arrived at Faenza. This Illustrious Signoria has decided to accept the guardianship and protection of the State of Faenza for the ward, son of Messer Galeotto, and has thus written, and has ordered troops to march towards Faenza, &c.<sup>1</sup> I fear, Illustrious Lord, that this year is the beginning of the thirteen disastrous months. All the condottieri who had been dismissed by this Illustrious Signoria they now show a desire to re-engage, indeed they have already begun to do so. My own feeling is that never was a greater need of attempting a reconciliation between the State of Milan and this Illustrious Signoria, and Your Excellency must strip to your shirt and use all your wisdom. It is a fact that Messer Galeotto was a soldier and a *raccomandato* (under the protection) of this Signoria, and to them belongs the guardianship of the State and the boy more than to others, particularly as the people themselves demand it.—Florence, June 5, 1488.<sup>2</sup>

. . . Yesterday I was with the Magnificent Lorenzo in S. Liberata [the cathedral] for full two hours talking about setting the Magnificent Messer Giovanni at liberty. His Magnificence replied that Your Excellency could write to and treat

<sup>1</sup> The Manfredi were lords of Faenza, which was under the protection of Florence. Galeotto Manfredi had been murdered by his jealous wife, Francesca Bentivoglio, and the citizens, afraid to lose their freedom, had taken her, and her father who had come from Bologna to her assistance, prisoners, and slain the Milanese general sent by Sforza. Lorenzo took the part of the murdered man's young son Astorre, and Giovanni Bentivoglio was kept a prisoner for some weeks at Modigliana, while his daughter Francesca was sent to Bologna to her mother.

<sup>2</sup> *Lettere e Notizie*, &c., Arch. Pal. di Modena, *op cit.*

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

with this Signoria as you pleased, and also with His Magnificence, but that he had warned Madonna Ginevra [wife of Giovanni Bentivoglio] to abstain from begging others to intercede for his liberation; hinting broadly to me that Messer Lodovico [Sforza] should not be asked to interfere . . . that until matters were arranged at Faenza Messer Giovanni must take patience, as this Signoria would support the people of Faenza until everything was in order.<sup>1</sup>

This morning the Illustrious Eight sent for me to announce that the citadel of Faenza had been given up by the governor and *etiam* the departure of Madonna Francesca.—Florence, June 9, 1488.<sup>2</sup>

. . . After the Magnificent Lorenzo had seen Messer Giovanni [Bentivoglio], who had been set at liberty and was in Florence, I went to hear what had passed between them. His Magnificence told me there had been much talk and that all the linen had been washed clean. It seemed to him that Messer Giovanni was quite satisfied and bore no rancour against this city or against himself, and had promised to represent matters to Milan so that nothing more would be said about Faenza. . . . At daylight the Magnificent Lorenzo left to take the baths at Villa (Filetta). His wife is very ill,<sup>3</sup> and there is no hope of her recovery.—Florence, July 21, 1488. . . .<sup>4</sup>

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### LORENZO DE' MEDICI to POPE INNOCENT VIII.

*Sanctissime ac Beatissime Pater post Pedum oscula Beatorum Vestrorum*,—Too often am I obliged to trouble and worry Your Beatitude with accidents sent by fortune and divine interposition, which as they are not to be resisted must be borne with patience. But the death of Clarice, which has just occurred,

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere e Notizie*, &c., Arch. Pal. di Modena, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Clarice was consumptive.

<sup>4</sup> *Lettere e Notizie*, &c., Arch. Pal. di Modena, *op. cit.*



*Clarice's death*

## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

my most dear and beloved wife, has been and is so prejudicial, so great a loss, and such a grief to me for many reasons, that it has exhausted my patience and my power of enduring anguish, and the persecution of fortune, which I did not think would have made me suffer thus. The deprivation of such habitual and such sweet company has filled my cup and has made me so miserable that I can find no peace. Nought is left but to pray God that He may give me peace, and I have faith that in His infinite love He will alleviate my sorrow and not overwhelm me with so many disasters as I have endured during these last years. I humbly beg Your Beatitude with all my heart to pray for me as I know how efficacious are such prayers. I commend myself and place myself at Your Holy Feet.—  
Filetta, July 31, 1488. Your devoted servant,

LAURENTIUS DE MEDICIS.<sup>1</sup>

MESSER ALDROVANDINI, *Ambassador to the Republic  
of Florence, to the DUKE ERCOLE D'ESTE*

. . . I wrote that Madonna Clarice was ill, she died three days ago, but I did not send the news at once as it did not seem to me of much importance. Now that I am despatching the courier with letters from Naples I inform Your Excellency. She died last Wednesday at 24 of the clock and was buried without pomp that evening. The Magnificent Lorenzo is at Filetta taking the waters and the baths and the doctors advise him strongly not to come to Florence, also his friends have written to persuade him to remain and finish his cure, and this he will do. To-day, according to the custom here, the funeral service will take place at 21 of the clock. The whole city and the ambassadors of H.M., of Milan, and myself, have been invited. But before I received the invitation I went with the Milanese ambassador to the house of the Magnificent Lorenzo,

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere di Lorenzo de' Medici a Innocenzo VIII.*, op. cit. 18.



## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

and we condoled with Piero, the Magnificent's eldest son, in the names of our Lords in such words as seemed fitted to the occasion.—Florence, August 1, 1488.<sup>1</sup>

Lorenzo's grief for the loss of Clarice, to whom he was sincerely but not passionately attached, was mitigated by the information that his heart's desire—the nomination of his second son Giovanni, a boy of fourteen, to the cardinalate—would not be long delayed. The lad was already abbot of Font Doulee, in the gift of the King of France, of Passignano in Tuscany bestowed on him by the Pope, of Miramondo given by Lodovico il Moro, and of the great abbey of Monte Cassino *in commendam* given to him by Ferrante, King of Naples. Innocent VIII. had declared he would make no cardinals under the age of thirty, but in March 1489 he yielded to Lorenzo's entreaties, on the understanding that the nomination was to be kept secret for three years, and was exceedingly irate when it was divulged.

MESSER ALDROVANDINI, *Ambassador of Ferrara to the Republic of Florence*, to DUKE ERCOLE D'ESTE

. . . Some Corsicans on the pretence of buying wheat from the Castellan of Monte-acuto, a castle in the Maremma belonging to Siena, entered in, slew the Castellan and seized the castle. The Sienese have sent a Commissary with troops, and have applied for help to the Signoria of Florence, who have ordered the Count of Pitigliano, their captain, to send his men to the aid of the Sienese.—January 10, 1489.<sup>2</sup>

. . . A courier has just arrived from the Count of Pitigliano to the Magnificent Lorenzo stating that his son has bought the castle of Monte-acuto from the Corsicans who had taken it, and he begs that his son, not being a soldier in the pay of this

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere*, &c., Arch. Pal. di Modena, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

Illustrious Signoria, may be allowed to keep it, because together with many others in that district it once was the property of his ancestors. Also that when his own engagement ceases at the end of February he intends to recuperate the others which are held by Siena. I wished to know how things really stood from the Magnificent Lorenzo, and he assured me that the engagement of the Count of Pitigliano would be prolonged and that he will give up the castle. And this I believe. . . .—Florence, January 21, 1489.<sup>1</sup>

STEFANO, *a trusted servant of Piero de' Medici, to*  
LORENZO DE' MEDICI

MAGNIFICENT LORENZO,—In my letter of yesterday evening I described the entry of Madonna the Duchess.<sup>2</sup> Now I tell you of the marriage. This morning we attended the marriage mass in the cathedral, a most beautiful and splendid ceremony as Your Magnificence will understand after reading this. First all the Court and the guests assembled at the castle. At 15 of the clock the Duke, my Lord Lodovico, the Barons and other gentlemen, went to fetch Madonna the Duchess, and they all mounted and left the castle in pairs. At the door was a canopy of white damask emblazoned with the Duke's arms, borne by forty doctors all dressed in crimson satin with certain fur round their necks, and their caps were also garnished with the same fur. Their Excellencies the Duke and Madonna rode side by side to the Duomo under the canopy. The mass was sung by the Duke's choristers and celebrated by the Bishop of Piacenza, and at the close the Bishop of Sanseverino gave an appropriate address. Then the Duke gave the ring to the Duchess. When all was finished the Illustrious Lord Duke knighted our Piero

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere, &c., Arch. Pal. di Modena, op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Gian Galeazzo Sforza, Duke of Milan, married his cousin, Isabella of Naples, daughter of Alfonso, Duke of Calabria. Lorenzo de' Medici was ill, so Piero, his son, met the Duchess at Leghorn, and then went to Milan to attend the marriage festivities.

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

Allamanni<sup>1</sup> and the Magnificent Bartolomeo Calcho, and bestowed on Piero a robe of golden brocade as rich and beautiful as can be. Truly a most honourable act. Messer Galeazzo and the Count di Cajaza buckled on the spurs and the swords. Then the whole company mounted and returned to the castle with great rejoicing and pomp. It is calculated there were about five hundred horses. Thirty-five divers Orders of friars and priests preceded the procession to the Duomo; sixty knights clothed in gold brocade with their collars; fifty women, twenty-eight were dressed in gold brocade with pearls, jewels, and fine necklaces; sixty-two trumpeters, and twelve fifers. The distance from the castle to the Duomo is 1200 paces and it was all covered in with white cloth, and the walls on either side were hung with tapestry and festoons of juniper and orange. Nothing finer was ever seen. All the doors and windows were crowded with women and girls splendidly dressed, and to avoid any crush or tumult all the streets leading into this principal one were barred, while at every corner stood ten or twelve guards. In the cathedral square were stationed two hundred Stradiots (Greek troops) and crossbow-men on horseback. Everything was so well managed that there was not the slightest disorder, a marvellous thing considering the innumerable multitude of people in this city. It is true that there was great rigour about bearing arms; no one, save our own people who always went armed, were allowed to carry weapons.

His Excellency the Duke had a vest of raised gold brocade, richer and finer than can be described, in his cap was a diamond ornament with a pearl bigger than a hazelnut, quite round, of great value. On his breast was a pendant with a ruby and a diamond above it, truly a most admirable thing.

Her Excellency the Duchess also wore brocade, and on her head was a garland of pearls with very fine jewels. There were many other women most richly dressed, but I do not write their names because I do not know them.

<sup>1</sup> Florentine ambassador to Milan.

## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

Messer Annibale had a robe of golden brocade with stripes of black velvet and where it opened on his breast was an eagle in pearls which made a good show, though it was not costly, but rather what one would call pretty.

The Lords Lodovico and Galeotto, the Lord Ridolfo and the rest of the Sforza family were dressed in brocade, and it is calculated that there were some three hundred thus clothed in silver and gold. Of velvet and satin I do not speak because even the cooks wore them.

The robe of our Piero with the bough embroidered on it<sup>1</sup> was much admired and according to my thinking eclipsed all the others. To-day their Excellencies sent for him, being desirous to see and examine it, and indeed every one was loud in their praise. I know I have written confusedly and without any order: by word of mouth if it pleases God, we will enter into detail with more leisure than I now have, as I must ride with Piero to Court. I have no more to say save that I commend myself to Your Magnificence.—Milan, February 2, 1488 (1489).<sup>2</sup>

PETRUS BONUS AVOGARIUS, *artium et medicinæ doctor*,  
to LORENZO DE' MEDICI

*Magnifice ac poteus domine domine mi singularissime salutem perpetuam, &c.*,—I have received the letter Your Magnificence sent me through the Magnificent Aldovrandini, ambassador of the Duke of Ferrara, and have understood what Your Magnificence writes about the remedy you desire, for *in doloribus juncturarum*, entering into details, and when and how, &c. To

<sup>1</sup> Piero de' Medici's device, invented by Poliziano, was a *broncone* or bough (in Nestor's drawing it looks more like a hurdle) in flames, with the motto, *In Viridi Teneras Flamma Medulas Exudit*, signifying that his love was so strenuous and incomparable that it would even set fire to green wood. *Histoire des Hommes Illustres de la Maison de Medici*. Jean Nestor, 1564.

<sup>2</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, &c., op. cit. ii. 296.

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

begin with, *ante omnium* Your Magnificence must be purged before the beginning of spring—that is, before the middle of March. Then if pains are felt the part is to be rubbed with the ointment made according to the recipe I have given to Messer Aldovrandini, which he will send to Your Magnificence. The pains will then cease, but should they return, and even if they do not return, some medicine must be taken to carry off the offending matter. My medicine is a conserve made up in solid form called *ellescof*, half an ounce is to be taken at sunrise once a month, particularly when Your Magnificence feels any pain. In order to prevent the return of these pains you must get a stone called sapphire, and have it set in gold, so that it should touch the skin. This must be worn on the third finger of the left hand. If this is done the pains in the joints, or gouty pains, will cease, because that stone has occult virtues, and the specific one of preventing evil humours going to the joints: *ego autem hoc expertus sum in me. Est enim divina res et miraculosa*. Afterwards in the summer, in the month of August, I will find celandine, which is a red stone that grows in the stomach of the swallow. I will send it to Your Magnificence to be tied in a piece of linen and sewn in your shirt under the left breast at the nipple. This will have the same effect as the sapphire afore-mentioned, and thus *Deo Duce* Your Magnificence will be freed of and secure from every pain in the joints. Messer Aldovrandini will see Your Magnificence, and tell you fully about it. In order that Your Magnificence should be acquainted with the future I send you herein enclosed my forecast for the year 1488, and commend myself a thousand times to Your Excellency whom may God keep in perfect health.—Ferrara, February 11, 1488 (1489).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, &c., *op. cit.* ii. 394.



## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

LORENZO DE' MEDICI to PIERO ALAMANNI, *Florentine  
Ambassador at Rome*

Thanks be to God for the good news which I received yester morning at nine from our Messer Giovanni [Tornabuoni]. It seems to me all the greater because I expected less, and it is so far more than I deserve, and so difficult of attainment, that it appeared almost impossible. I have, indeed, reason ever gratefully to remember him who has worked so hard, and I shall leave my gratitude recorded for those who come after me, as this is the greatest honour that has ever befallen our house. Let it suffice to you that I know this; most assuredly more than three-fourths are due to your diligence, industry, and affection. But we will speak of this another time. To the Holy Father I have written a letter which is enclosed. I also write to Bala [Cardinal La Balue] and Ascanio [Cardinal Sforza], the only ones from whom as yet I have had letters. From you I expect full details about various things which are mentioned below. I know not if our Holy Father was displeased at the demonstrations of joy which were universal here. Never have I seen more true and general rejoicing. Much more would have been done, only I forbade it, but this I could not prevent. I say this, because Messer Giovanni's promotion being secret these demonstrations seemed contrary to the intention, but it was a thing of such public notoriety in Rome that people here can hardly be blamed for following the example set there, and I could not refuse to accept the congratulations of all these citizens, down to the very poorest. If it was unseemly it was impossible to prevent, and I should be glad if you can explain this. Also I much wish to know how to order Messer Giovanni's future life; how he is to dress, and what household he is to have, for I do not desire to repay so great a boon by doing anything against the wishes of our Holy Father. Meanwhile Messer Giovanni is in our house,



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which has been full of people since yesterday. Let me know therefore what I am to do. Also if he has occasion to write how is he to sign, and what seal is he to use? About the Bull I know you will take all precautions, and send it to me for the satisfaction of our friends. I send you herein his height, but he seems to me to have grown since yesterday, and to have changed. I trust to God that he will do honour to all your labour, and that our Holy Father will every day be better pleased with him. I wait to know whether I am to send Piero as I wrote, for to me it seems this great gift demands that I should come in person. I shall follow your advice in everything.<sup>1</sup>—[March 14, 1489].

### LORENZO DE' MEDICI to INNOCENT VIII.

With the greatest reverence I have received a Brief from Your Sanctity of the 9th, in which you deign to acquaint me of the promotion of Messer Giovanni (to the Cardinalate). Having already heard of it through our ambassador I wrote at once with my own hand to Your Holiness, rather to confess my inability to give adequate thanks than to demonstrate my gratitude; our Lord God can do that better than I. For a long time Your Sanctity has had the disposal of myself and of all I possess, so I can only add this great gift to the other benefits bestowed on Messer Giovanni, whom I give to Your Holiness as a thing belonging to Your Holiness. Whatever I have or shall have will always be more Your Holiness' than mine. As to keeping this affair secret I should be much distressed if the knowledge of it had been made public by me. But Your Holiness may rest assured that it was immediately known in Rome, and then divulged by letters to people here, so that every one came to congratulate me. I can affirm that the news was not published by me, nor did I cause any demonstration

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita, &c.*, ii. 300.

## LORENZO DI PIÈRO DE' MEDICI

of joy to be made. In any case, whether by my fault or not, I am extremely distressed that Your Holiness should have experienced any annoyance, and can only promise in the future to carry out to the letter any commands Your Holiness deigns to give me. I entreat Your Holiness to make Your wishes known to me, of which I shall be the faithful and diligent executor, not only in this, but in all things, for no one is more bound to obey Your Holiness. I commend myself humbly at the Holy Feet of Your Beatitude.—Florence, March 14, 1488 (1489). *Humilis Servitor*, LAURENTIUS DE MEDICIS.<sup>1</sup>

### MANFREDO DI MANFREDI (*a new Ferrarese Ambassador*) to DUKE ERCOLE D'ESTE

. . . This evening about one of the night, the Magnificent Lorenzo and the Illustrious Eight sent to tell me the good news that that blessed Monte-acuto has been given up. . . .—Florence, April 8, 1489.<sup>2</sup>

. . . The Count of Pitigliano will be dismissed because this Signoria and the Magnificent Lorenzo are very irate at the obstinacy he has shown about giving up Monte-acuto. . . . It seems that Jacopo Conti will be named in his stead. . . . The Magnificent Lorenzo is a man who does not waste many words, and tells his intentions to no one until he is sure of obtaining what he wants. He never says four until he has it safe in a sack. . . .—Florence, April 25, 1489.<sup>3</sup>

Yesterday two men taken at Firenzuola were brought here, one named Raimo da Gaeta, the other Vincenzo Ragonora; the report is that they were going to the baths where the Magnificent Lorenzo now is, in order to poison or murder him. It is said they were sent by H.M. the King of Naples or by the Duke of Calabria, although it is affirmed that they have been

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere di Lorenzo a Innocenzo VIII.*, op. cit. 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Lettere e Notizie*, &c., Arch. Pal. di Modena, op. cit.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

some time at Bologna. Some hold the report to be unfounded and that these men came for another purpose. Nevertheless they have been subjected to such a stringent examination that it has raised suspicions among the ambassadors. They were examined by the principal citizens, relations, and intimate friends of the Magnificent Lorenzo. . . . This evening I hear that a horseman arrived from Messer Giovanni Bentivoglio, and I have found out that he was sent to the King's ambassador by the said Messer Giovanni, who anxiously begs H.M. to take steps for the release of these prisoners; the King has written to say that about six months ago they were sent to him by the Duke of Calabria with a request that they might be engaged in his army, and he bids the ambassador to see that they are set free, being soldiers of the Duke of Calabria and in his pay. —Florence, May 18, 1489.<sup>1</sup>

. . . Why these men were imprisoned and the results of their examination have been kept so secret that no one can find out anything. But Raimo da Gaeta has, they say, been tortured, so is in anguish and despair. . . . —Florence, May 29, 1489.<sup>2</sup>

### LORENZO DE' MEDICI to POPE INNOCENT VIII.

My ambassador has written to tell me that at last by the kindness of Your Holiness the contract of the alum works has been awarded to me, for this I owe infinite thanks to Your Holiness who has thus added another to the many obligations I already owe, and hope to enjoy in the future from the liberality and kindness of Your Beatitude. I am exceedingly grateful for and pleased by the paternal charity shown to me every day by Your Holiness, and should be yet more happy did I not hear that Your Holiness has been suffering from gout and slight fever. Although the attack is not a severe one, still, depending

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere e Notizie*, &c., Arch. Pal. de Modena, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

as I do on Your Holiness, and Your Holiness' life being of such importance, I cannot but feel uneasy even at a small indisposition, particularly as these attacks come oftener than one could wish. Your Holiness can rest assured that even as S. Francis by reason of his stigmatæ felt the pain of the wounds of Jesus Christ, thus do I feel every pain and ill suffered by Your Holiness in my own person and am much molested thereby. Among other things the condition of our Ser Francesco<sup>1</sup> touches me deeply, as well as that of other dependants of Your Holiness, who by reason of the uprightness and honesty of Your Beatitude may be said to be still fasting and to have had but a small share of the great good fortune which our Lord God has so worthily bestowed on Your Holiness. Should anything happen to Your Holiness, *quod absit*, the sepulchre will open also for them. Although I feel compassion for them all I am more moved by what ought to touch Your Holiness more nearly than myself, and that is the sad condition of poor Ser Francesco, who in the five years of the pontificate of Your Holiness has never yet had anything he can call his own. Your Holiness is the best judge of what support he enjoys in the Sacred College and what office, dignity or means, he has to enable him to live, even poorly. If Your Holiness studies the lives of other Popes you will see that there are but few who during five years of pontifical rule, and some in even less time, have not manifested their intention of acting as a Pope, and have not shown the respect for honesty and uprightness displayed by Your Holiness, which is justified before God and man. But speaking as a devoted servant, this honesty might now be imputed and attributed to another motive. Maybe I appear presumptuous, but zeal and the duty I owe to Your Holiness so touch my conscience that I must speak thus openly and remind Your Holiness that all men are mortal, and that a Pope is what he wills to be; he cannot leave the Papacy as

<sup>1</sup> Francesco Cibò, the Pope's son, married to Maddalena de' Medici, Lorenzo's daughter.

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a heritage and can only call his own the honours, the glory and the benefits, he gives to his family. The prudence, experience and long acquaintance Your Sanctity has of a court, will I am sure without words from me, recall to Your Holiness what always happens to the fortune and inheritance of popes, and seeing that Ser Francesco and the others of Your Holiness' family are as yet not to be envied but rather merit compassion, Your Sanctity ought to follow the example of Your Holiness' predecessors and place them in such a position that they should have no need of others, particularly as whatever is bestowed on them does not diminish the substance of Your Holiness and is not lost or thrown away. Briefly, with all humility, I entreat Your Sanctity at last to begin and act as a Pope with regard to the family of Your Holiness and not to trust so much in posterity and good health, which can only retard the fulfilment of what Your Holiness intends to do for them. Delay might perhaps prevent this being accomplished. Especially do I recommend Your and my Ser Francesco and the Lady Maddalena, who pray that God may grant Your Holiness a long life in order that their affairs may be properly adjusted, and when better arranged they will give thanks to God and to Your Holiness, and have reason to remember and to bless the day when Your Sanctity was called to the honours and dignity of the pontificate. It is time, Holy Father, to liberate these Holy Fathers from limbo, so that it may not happen to them as to the Jews who awaited the Messiah. I beg Your Holiness' pardon with all humility and reverence for this my presumption only caused by reasons which I am sure Your Holiness will appreciate, and I place myself humbly at Your most holy feet.—1489. *Humilis Servitor,*

LAURENTIUS DE MEDICIS.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere di Lorenzo a Innocenzo VIII.*, op. cit.



# LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

A MANAGER OF THE MEDICI BANK *to the* DUKE  
ERCOLE D'ESTE

To the Illustrious DUKE ERCOLE, &c.

According to the usual custom and rule we advise you that to-day the Magnificent Lorenzo has lent Pope Innocent 100,000 ducats for a year ; one-third in cash, one-third in silk goods, and one-third in woollen cloth. As surety he has two-tenths on the stipends of all newly appointed priests, 70,000 ducats, and for the rest he will hold Città di Castello until entirely repaid.

I give you another piece of news : Pope Innocent has given the Magnificent Lorenzo 30,000 cántara of alum at 1 ducat the cántaro as payment of what was owing to him by Pope Sixtus, the 40,000 he received for the war, which is good news.—Florence, 1489. Your servant and particular partisan,

B. DES. of the Medici Bank.<sup>1</sup>

It appears that Lorenzo's share in the bank was one-half, the other half belonged to various partners. The Duke of Ferrara wrote on the 20th December 1489 to Giuliano Gondi announcing that he had arranged a marriage for his daughter Isabella with the Marquess of Mantua on the 16th February 1490, and begged for a spinel ruby which was in pawn for 4000 ducats with the Magnificent Lorenzo & Co. in order to wear it during the festivities. He also wrote to Lorenzo asking that the ruby might be sent, saying that he could not pay the money at that moment. But Lorenzo answered that he could only promise for the half as the other belonged to various merchants. So the Duke again wrote to Gondi and asked him to go surety for him for 2000 ducats repayable in April 1492, guaranteed on the salt mines of Modena, &c. Lorenzo was also a partner in the bank at Lyons with Francesco Sassetti and others, of which the manager was Leonetto de' Rossi, husband of Maria de' Medici, Lorenzo's sister. Machiavelli's statement that Lorenzo had nothing to do with the bank is contradicted by the above letter.

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere e Notizie*, Arch. Pal. di Modena, p. 315.



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LORENZO DE' MEDICI to GIOVANNI LANFREDINI,  
*Florentine Ambassador at Rome*

The Count della Mirandola is here leading a most saintly life, like a monk. He has been and is now occupied in writing admirable theological works: commentaries and Psalms; and other excellent books on theology. He recites the ordinary priest's office, observes all fasts and absolute chastity: has but a small retinue and lives quite simply with only what is necessary. To me he appears an example to other men. He is anxious to be absolved from what little contumacy is still attributed to him by the Holy Father and to have a Brief by which His Holiness accepts him as a son and a good Christian, he persevering in a Christian life. I greatly desire that this satisfaction should be given to him, for there are few men I love better or esteem more. I feel certain that he is a devout and faithful Christian, and his conduct is such that the whole city would vouch for him. Do all you can to obtain this Brief in such a form that it may content his conscience. This would be not less agreeable to me than any one of the many services you have rendered, and for which I am most grateful.—June 19, 1489.<sup>1</sup>

LORENZO DE' MEDICI, *from the Baths of Spedaletto,*  
*to his daughter CONTESSINA*

MY DEAR LITTLE CONTESSINA,—As I hear that every hour thou askest after me, how I am, and when I am coming back, I write to tell thee that thanks be to God I am very well, and have improved ever since my departure. These continued baths suit me excellently. So that I hope, if it pleases God, to return as full of health as ever I was. I shall leave very

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, op. cit. ii. 293.

## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

soon and come back to see thee. Let me find thee well and happy and meanwhile pray to God for me. Be very nice to Alfonsina [Orsini, wife of Piero, Lorenzo's eldest son] and keep her company; tell her from me to take great care of the baby. I hear that Monsignore [Giovanni] and the other children have gone away, they have done ill to leave thee thus alone, but I shall be back soon and stay with thee, and they can remain at the villa at their pleasure.—Spedaletto on the last day of July, 1489.

Greet thy Piero and Niccolò and all the others from me when thou seest them.<sup>1</sup>

### LORENZO DE' MEDICI to GIOVANNI LANFREDINI, *Florentine Ambassador at Rome*

To my great vexation I hear how this work of Mirandola's is abused, and were I not sure that such persecution is dictated solely by envy and malignity, by my faith, I should not mention it. The book has been examined by all the most learned priests here, well-known men of saintly life, and has been highly approved of by them as a Christian and a marvellous work. I am not so bad a Christian as to remain silent or to encourage him if I thought otherwise. I am certain that if he recited the *Credo* those spiteful men would say it was rank heresy. If His Holiness had the intelligence to understand this and was not too busy, I am sure these accusations would fall to the ground and truth would prevail; but he is obliged to trust to others. This poor man is unable to defend himself because they say his premises are against His Holiness. If he had to contend with them only without the authority of the Pope to back them I am sure he would soon silence them. It is his misfortune to have to submit to the judgment of ignorant and malicious men who use the Pope as a shield. I have

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza xxiv. No. 502.

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

already told you that I believe all this is done with the intent to drive him to despair and cause him to lose his head so that eventually he should turn against the Pope; for believe me, Giovanni, he is one who could commit either great evil or great good. His life and character demonstrate this. If they drive him into another path I shall lose little, as I know that wherever he may be he will always bear me goodwill because of my great affection for him. I have never been able to make you understand this; and without entering into details, which I cannot do, I must tell you he has been sorely tempted by something which might raise a great scandal, and I have always stopped him. Latterly he has been leading a saintly life here, and his mind is at rest. These devils with their persecutions will tempt him. People place far too much faith in them. In short I can only grieve over all this and beg you again to use all your cleverness in order to arrange matters, for you have no idea how it vexes and irritates me. If you knew how much, you would never rest until you have taken it off my mind.—October 1489.<sup>1</sup>

### LORENZO DE' MEDICI to MONSEIGNEUR D'ARGENTON (PHILIPPE DE COMINES)

MY ILLUSTRIOUS LORD,—I have received a letter from Your Seignury by the same hand that takes this, and am extremely concerned at the displeasure you express about the last account sent in by Cosimo Saxetti [Sasseti, head of the Medici bank at Lyons] to Your Seignury. It would afflict me still more if I thought that this might cause you to doubt my gratitude towards Your Seignury, to whom I am so much beholden in infinite ways, that I should indeed deserve to be called a most ungrateful man if I did not repay you the money I owe for the many benefits received from Your Seignury in adversity and

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, op. cit. ii. 292.



Alinari

LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI,  
AND THREE MEMBERS OF THE  
SASSETI FAMILY. *In the fresco by  
Domenico Ghirlandaio in the Church of  
S. Trinità, Florence.*



## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

in prosperity. But after a strict examination of my conscience I can assure Your Seignury that neither I nor any of my house will ever forget this. If therefore anything Cosimo Saxetti has said about Your Seignury's participation has given such an impression I should be deeply grieved, as it would be the reverse of the truth and of my intentions. I confess that for some time, as Your Seignury well knows, the losses of our bank at Lyons have been so considerable that it has been impossible to conceal them, or to avoid lamenting over them with those who, like Your Seignury, have been and are masters of what is mine. The aforesaid Cosimo has thus perhaps annoyed Your Seignury, but you may be certain that I would never raise any question as to a statement of yours, either what you now write or at any future time. Your Seignury can freely dispose not only of the entire sum which you mention as being a matter of dispute between Your Seignury and Cosimo, but of everything I possess as though it belonged to you. You may therefore rest assured that all will be arranged between Your Seignury and myself so satisfactorily that no question will ever arise, for I set greater store on the good graces of Your Seignury than on the largest sum of money in the world.—December 11, 1489.<sup>1</sup>

The following letter from Vettori, Florentine ambassador at Naples, and the one from Lorenzo to Lanfredini at Rome (p. 319) show what prudence and patience the Magnificent exercised in mediating between the Pope and the King of Naples. Ferrante broke every obligation of his treaty with Innocent. He exterminated the rebel Barons with ferocity, he murdered the Papal governor and garrison of Aquila, he bestowed the Neapolitan benefices on unworthy men without heeding the remonstrances of the Pope, he repudiated the tribute due to the Holy See. Innocent was very angry. He declared the Kingdom to be forfeited for non-payment of the

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza xliii. No. 157. (The date is uncertain, as there is a blot of ink on the figure 8. A rough copy in Lorenzo's handwriting.)



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tribute, he threatened an interdict and, what particularly alarmed and displeased Lorenzo, talked about foreign intervention. Against both Lorenzo warned him, at the same time supporting him in resisting humiliating terms. Had Lodovico Sforza been trustworthy Lorenzo's task might have been easier, but he significantly remarks, "I have expressed my opinion of the Lord Lodovico and have said what I think of him." At length, shortly before Lorenzo's death, peace was concluded, Ferrante consenting to pay the tribute on condition of the investiture of his son and grandson.

PIETRO VETTORI, *Florentine Ambassador at Naples, to*  
LORENZO DE' MEDICI

MAGNIFICENT LORENZO,—Since I wrote on the 2nd I have received yours of February 29th, which arrived most opportunely as here they were anxious, and suspected you had some secret understanding with the Pope. As the King was not here I thought it better to communicate your letter to H.E. the Duke [Alfonso of Calabria]. So yesterday I went to Castel Nuovo and took Baccio with me, who had been summoned here by the Duke. When he had read the letter I added that though you knew the King and H.E. were convinced of the loyalty of ourselves and of our city, yet it seemed to me that as these suspicions had arisen you wished to set matters right, and that you were the same Lorenzo you had ever been. H.E. answered he had no doubt of this. That he had summoned Baccio in order to send him to you at Florence to inform you of his feelings, as he liked to speak openly and desired others to do so to him. That it was perfectly known all over Italy what influence you had with the Pope and that the Florentine ambassador *quodammodo* governed at Rome. On the other hand the Pope showed great animosity towards the Neapolitan State and had only summoned those Spanish ambassadors in order to protest against H.M. the King and then to publish the excommunications which were already ready. H.E. is informed that

## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

last year and also two years ago everything was being secretly prepared for this last blow. He appears to have some other source of information than the usual ones. He added that his chief occupation now was contradicting those who by word of mouth or by letters from Rome told him that you are in league with the Pope, and allow these things to happen, and that although neither he nor the King believe this all Italy is convinced of it, to their great detriment. The Pope's behaviour shows that he is of the same opinion, for if he thought that Milan and ourselves were what we ought to be he would never attempt anything against this State. But one wounds him here, another caresses him there, and between them all we, exclaimed H.E., go to the devil. He said he would like to meet you and the Lord Lodovico in one room and discuss matters, and did not think it would be difficult to convince you that this our League must be united not only in deeds but in demonstrations. That it was evident the Pope did much for you, he had for instance made your son a cardinal at an unheard-of age, and therefore it was thought that if you insisted things would go differently. He then added that neither he nor the King had heard anything about the troop of Jacopo Conti or the Count's dismissal, though Jacopo had written to him about this a month ago. H.E. said it seemed as if you suspected him, though he would do all to forward your projects. I replied it was true that the Pope showed some regard for you and had acceded to your wishes as to the Cardinalate and one or two other matters, but that it was possible your influence did not extend to the affairs of H.M. the King, because although you could do much you could not do all. Also that Your Magnificence had been informed that H.E. had greatly encouraged the Count not to give up Monte Agutolo, which was a blow aimed at you; so that if he heeded not your honour and interest, he would find others do the same. He had not yet been told of the Count's dismissal or about Jacopo's troop, because they were connected together, and it was impossible to

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

write until affairs were settled. Owing to the disgraceful conduct of the Count about Monte Agutolo you and all our citizens had determined to dismiss him, and had not informed H.M. the King or H.E., as they thought pressure might be brought to bear on them to retain him and they did not wish to say no to H.E. I added that as H.E. loved you he ought to be pleased if the Pope showed you any favour, because he might be sure that if you had to choose between them you would leave the Pope and follow H.E. That he was to consult with H.M. the King as to the particular thing they wanted and that I was sure you would always be ready to do anything honourable, but they must not make vague complaints. Lorenzo does nothing because perhaps Their Excellencies do not know exactly what they really want, or he could not do what they desired. But that I was certain that any just and honourable service he could render H.M. and H.E. he would do it. H.E. replied that he would consult with H.M., and give me an answer. I see he wants our ambassador and the ambassador of Milan to tell the Pope that they will not tolerate any measures being taken against the King. Then he added that he had sent a competent man to Barbary to acquire one or two horses fit for racing, in order to send them to you; *et alia non occurrunt*. I commend myself to you, may God grant you felicity.—Naples, March 9, 1489 (1490).<sup>1</sup>

LORENZO DE' MEDICI, *from Bagno San Filippo,*  
*to his son PIERO*

PIERO,—Enclosed is a letter from Baccio; the bearer is the man of whom he writes, who is passing through Florence. He seems to me clever and one who loves to see antique things. I wish thee to show him all those in the garden, and also what

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, &c., *op. cit.* ii. 344.

## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

we have in the study ; in short, whatever seems best to thee, and thus to give him pleasure.—Bagno San Filippo, May 9, 1490.<sup>1</sup>

### LORENZO DE' MEDICI *to the* COMMISSARIES OF PISTOJA

MAGNIFICENT COMMISSARIES,—Two or three days ago I wrote to Your Magnificences about the liberation of Bastiano di Nanni, imprisoned by you and in danger of losing his life. And although I have not had an answer, yet considering the contents of the enclosed letter from Ser Andrea who lives in Siena with regard to our Republic, I have determined to write again to beg you, not in a general way but from my heart, no longer to delay in acceding to the request of the Magnificent Signory of Siena, to whom I am under such obligations that if they do not obtain their desire great blame and dishonour will fall on me. Your Magnificences are aware that when one embarks on such an undertaking one spares no effort to accomplish it with honour. For the love of God deliver me from this annoyance, which is considerable, and set the aforesaid Bastiano free according to their wish, for their character is such that either good or great evil will result. I do not think you will wait for another communication from me, delay will greatly diminish the trust the Sienese have in me.—San Filippo, May 21, 1490, at midday. LAURENTIUS DE MEDICIS.<sup>2</sup>

### LORENZO DE' MEDICI *to* SER ANDREA *at* Siena

Early this morning I had your letter telling me about Dormi and the swelling which began in his body and then settled in his right knee, and of the remedies applied by those

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza xviii. No. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, xliii. No. 139.

## LETTERS OF THE EARLY MEDICI

farriers. You were right to have the horse doctored at once, and to write fully to me. Wait until the day of the race [the Palio at Siena], and if the farrier and the jockey think the horse is not in a fit state to run, we forbid his starting as it might do him harm, and indeed injure him permanently, even if you think he could run. I leave it to you, who being on the spot can judge better than I can here. I am not inclined to send another horse, we are too near the day of the race, he would arrive tired, and do us little honour.—Florence, July 28, 1490.

LAURENTIUS DE MEDICIS.<sup>1</sup>

LORENZO DE' MEDICI to GIOVANNI LANFREDINI,  
*Florentine Ambassador at Rome*

Two days ago I met by chance the Count della Mirandola riding in the outskirts of Florence. He is living very quietly in a villa near by, immersed in his studies. He desires at last to know what his future is to be, for having obeyed His Holiness hitherto and being decided to obey him implicitly in the future, he wishes to have some indication that His Holiness accepts his obedience in the form of a Brief, whereby the Pope acknowledges him as an obedient son and a good Christian, which I believe him to be. Among other proofs of this he has converted a young Jew who has been translating for him from the Hebrew language, of which he is a perfect master, whom he has persuaded to become a Christian. This is not the act of a heretic. I much desire that for the honour of His Holiness and for my own satisfaction this matter should be finished, and that the virtue and goodness of the said Count Giovanni should have as great a weight as the calumnies and suggestions of others. By nature he is devoted to His Holiness and does not dwell on what is past. Once delivered from this con-

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza xli. No. 531.



## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

tumacy he will be the partisan and faithful servant of His Holiness, who to my thinking will thereby gain much.—  
August 11, 1490.<sup>1</sup>

LORENZO DE' MEDICI to GIOVANNI LANFREDINI,  
*Florentine Ambassador at Rome*

By your letter of the 13th I understand that the Pope has taken umbrage at the note presented by you, so do not proceed further with it. Anything that vexes His Sanctity annoys me, and I should be very sorry if he thought that any act or word of mine was not dictated by a desire for the good of His Holiness. You can assure him that I am always his servant and shall ever be. If I advised moderation in these proceedings against the King [of Naples] I only did so for the aforesaid reasons. As I wrote the other day, it seems to me necessary that His Holiness should decide on following one of three paths: either enforce his will by war against the King, or come to some agreement, or, if an honourable agreement is not possible, to temporise and wait for better times. The first would be the most honourable, but I conceive dangerous and very costly; indeed I do not think it possible unless the Neapolitan dynasty is changed. For this, according to my views, three things are necessary: either Venice or Milan must be a party to the enterprise, or the new ruler must be strong and well supplied with men and money, or the Holy Father must prepare to assert himself without stint of money or other

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, op. cit. ii. 293. (By some mistake Fabroni gives the date as August 1492. Lorenzo died on April 8 of that year.) During a visit to Rome in 1486 Pico della Mirandola had promulgated nine hundred theses on theology, philosophy, magic, and the Cabbalah, which he offered to maintain in public disputation. Heresies contained in them were pointed out by his enemies and Innocent VIII. issued a Brief against those considered as dangerous. Pico fled to France and published an apology protesting his orthodoxy, but it was only by Lorenzo's influence that the Pope was induced to suspend proceedings. Pico then returned to Florence and Lorenzo, as this and the two former letters show, pressed the Pope hard to grant his friend a full pardon.



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things, to carry the thing through. It is indispensable that the Pope and the new ruler, whoever he may be, should be stronger than the King alone, supposing always that Venice adheres and would prevent Milan from helping the King. If they were understood with the Neapolitan Barons, or other such small folk, so much the better. I may be mistaken as to the first proposition when I dissuaded His Holiness from following it, but the state of things does not seem to me propitious. Perhaps I am not enough versed in all the secrets and therefore see and anticipate wrongly. His Holiness must have some promises or hopes, for the choice lies between Spain and France. Spain does not appear to me strong enough, particularly as regards money. What reliance is to be placed on France, seeing the French nature, I know not. Supposing she changed her nature I should agree with our Holy Father that it would be the best solution, for there would be less danger in augmenting the power of one of the house of Lorraine than of Spain, for the Duke of Lorraine is not King of France and we see by experience that the King of Naples is far more influenced by Spain than the Duke of Lorraine is by France. It is true the Kings of Naples and Spain are not friends, and that whoever is King of Naples would work for his own hand. For all these reasons, although there may be others I do not understand, I cannot advise the Pope to undertake such an enterprise now; and in that case it is unwise to exasperate the King with citations and other threats. Even were His Holiness fully prepared to go forward I think he ought to avoid the slightest sign of ill-will, in order not to incur any danger from what the King might say or do. This danger seems to me to exist, therefore he would do better to dissimulate and make secret preparations, than to show anger before being ready to strike, which would only give an opportunity to others to make ready and to attack. So for every reason in the first proposition I do not think it wise to cite the King. As to the second I may also be mistaken, because conditions may have been

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proposed of which I am not aware, and which may be rendered feasible by this very citation, if the affair is matured and almost settled. In this case the assumption of superiority may help to decide matters. But if there is nothing more than I know the affair seems embittered and not at all easy of solution; therefore such methods might lead to a scandal or even to an open rupture, instead of to an agreement. The advantages of temporising cannot, I think, be denied. There can be no doubt that it is better to arrange matters, having due regard to the reputation of His Holiness, than to tempt fortune; for you know better than I do that the King can do much harm. But, as I said before, I do not know enough about these matters so cannot say more. If the Pope has good reasons for his fearless attitude let me know them to relieve my mind, for though not of a timid nature I am far more anxious about his affairs than about my own, because of the trust he reposes in me. If His Holiness is satisfied, I have such faith in his prudence and authority that I shall be tranquillised. But until I hear these reasons I confess that I am uneasy. For the love of God let me know, as I do not feel at all well. The Pope must not on any account imagine that I think, do, or act, in any way against his interests, for the benefits I have received from His Holiness, and those I hope for, derive from his power and reputation. My opinion of the Lord Lodovico I have expressed, and have said what I thought of him. My intentions are loyal, and as I depend much on His Holiness I can only repeat that if he can come to an honourable understanding with the King it would be, I consider, better than war. If there is any difficulty about this I would do my utmost to arrange matters to the Pope's honour and security; supposing always that the above-mentioned conditions, of which I know nothing, and which would make it possible to act against the King, are non-existent. If they do exist I am sure the King would consent to honourable terms because he would understand what evil might befall him otherwise. But all my

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suppositions are useless if the Pope has secret information unknown to me. I do not think my open speaking can offend His Holiness, for our fortunes are bound up together. I wish to be allowed to say what I think, but will act according to the wishes of our Holy Father. Thank him most heartily for the loving and kindly reply about the Servite Order with regard to Messer Giovanni. For all these things I am deeply indebted to His Holiness. I am very glad you have been to Cervetri and S. Severa, and most pleased that you were satisfied with the way Signor Francesco (Cibò) treats his subjects. God knows his honour and well-being are as dear to me as my own. I beg of you to do all you can to induce our Holy Father to arrange this affair of S. Severa. You see yourself the importance and the necessity of adding this property to that of Cervetri. I should also like to know about the affair of Gallese in order to reply to the friend who is coming here soon. It is urgent that His Holiness should once for all arrange the affairs of Signor Francesco so that I should not be daily worried about them, and that we can live in peace and harmony. To speak plainly, Signor Francesco has not the position the nephew of a Pope ought to have, and yet we are now approaching the seventh year of the Pontificate. More regard should be shown to the increasing family, which is a valid reason for our Holy Father's aid.—Florence, October 17, 1489.<sup>1</sup>

### LORENZO DE' MEDICI *to the* KING OF ENGLAND

SERENE MAJESTY,—When this Signiory writes to recommend one of their citizens they have such hope and faith in the clemency and kindness of Your Majesty, that neither do they doubt of their gracious reception nor do I consider it necessary to intervene in their behalf. Yet, to satisfy my conscience, being in duty bound to help the citizens of this Republic, I

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, &c., ii. 365 *et seq.*

## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

cannot refrain from recommending with all reverence and humility to Your Majesty Filippo del Vigna for the affair he will explain. I assure Your Majesty that no greater token of interest and clemency towards this city can be given than to accept the aforesaid Filippo as a faithful servant, and to aid him to recover his indemnity, and I, for my part, should be everlastingly grateful.

I commend myself humbly to Your Majesty.<sup>1</sup>

### AGNOLO POLIZIANO to LORENZO DE' MEDICI in Florence

MAGNIFICENT PATRON,—My last letter was from Ferrara. In Padua I found some good books, *i.e.* Simplicio, on the Sky; Alessandro, on the Topica; Giovan Grammatico, on the Posteriora and the Syllogism; a David on Aristotle; none of which we have in Florence. I also found a Greek scribe in Padua and arranged with him at a ducat for every fifteen pages.

Maestro Piero Leoni showed me his books: among them I found M. Manlio, an old astronomer and poet, which I have brought with me to Venice to compare with one I have bought; I have never seen a more ancient book. *Similiter* he possesses certain books of Galieno *de dogmate Aristotelis et Hippocratis* in Greek, of which he will give us a copy in Padua, so we shall have gained something.

In Venice I have found some books of Archimedes and Eron, mathematicians, which we have not got, and a Frunuto *de Deis*, and other valuable things. So papa Janni<sup>2</sup> will have writing enough to do for some time.

Niceno's [Cardinal] library we were not able to see. Messer Aldobrandini, the Duke of Ferrara's ambassador, *in cujus domo*

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Med. ante Prin.*, Filza xliii. No. 142 (draft of letter in Lorenzo's handwriting without date).

<sup>2</sup> A Greek scribe employed by Lorenzo in copying.

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*habitamus*, went to the Prince but was met with a blunt refusal. He asked for Count Giovanni [Pico della Mirandola], not for me, as I thought it better not to mention your name in the affair. Messer Antonio Vinciguerra and Messer Antonio Pizamanno, one of the two philosophers who came incognito to Florence to see the Count, and a brother of Messer Zaccheria Barbaro, are engaged in trying to overcome this obstinacy; everything possible will be tried. This is all I have to say about books.

Messer Piero Leoni has been greatly persecuted in Padua and has no patients either there or in Venice. Yet he is a good doctor and held in high esteem. I have caused him to be sounded by the Count as to coming to Tuscany, but I think it will be difficult. He does not like Padua and the society does not please him, *ut ipse ait; negat tamen se ille in Thusciam agere*.

Nicoletto would come to Pisa but wants a benefice, *hoc est* one of those canonries. His name stands high in Padua and his method is good; but, *nisi fallor*, he is one of these odd fantastical men. He it was who mentioned the benefice to me; so I warn you.

This morning I paid a visit to Messer Zaccheria Barbaro and assured him of your affection &c.; he replied tearfully *et ut visum est* from his heart: all resolved itself into *in te uno spem esse*. *Ostendit se nosse quantum tibi debeat*: so do what you intended, *ut favens ad majora*. The Legate, who has returned from Rome, *et qui tecum locutus est Florentiæ*, is not at all of their way of thinking, *ut ajunt*.

Messer Zaccheria showed me a very beautiful antique earthen vase which was sent to him lately from Greece, and told me that if I thought you would like it he would send it to you with two smaller ones. I said it was just what Your Magnificence would admire *et tandem* it will be yours. Tomorrow morning the box shall be made and I will send it off. I do not think you have so fine a one *in eo genere*: it is about three spans high and four wide.



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The Count [Pico della Mirandola] has bad eyes and has not been out of the house since he came to Venice.

*Item* yester evening I paid a visit to the learned Cassandra Fidele and greeted her in your name. She is no less wonderful, Lorenzo, in the vulgar tongue than in Latin; most discreet, *et meis oculis etiam* handsome. I came away astounded. To you she is most partial and talked about you with such understanding *quasi te intus et in cute norit*. One of these days she intends to go to Florence to see you, so prepare to do her honour.

I have no more to say at present, save that your causing Greek books to be copied and the favour you show to learned men sets you higher in the esteem and honour of the world than any man has enjoyed for many years. Other particulars I reserve for my return. I commend myself to Your Magnificence. I have not yet used the letter of exchange as I have had no need of it.—Venice, June 20, 1491.

The servant of Your Magnificence,

ANGELUS POLITIANUS.<sup>1</sup>

PIER FILIPPO PANDOLFINI, *Florentine Ambassador*  
at Rome, to LORENZO DE' MEDICI

Monsignor d'Arles told me yesterday morning that the Signoria of Venice and all the Venetian gentlemen are very irate with us for two things. First because, according to them, we tried through the Soldan to prevent that journey of theirs. Secondly on account of the agreement about wool from England, which they have so much at heart that they could not be more angry and are decided to upset it at any cost. They have ordered that all ships carrying wool to Pisa, no matter to whom they belong, are to be prevented from loading in Candia, Cyprus, or any other place where they have ports, and that no ship of theirs is to touch at Porto Pisano. I do not know

<sup>1</sup> *Prose Volgari inedite*, &c., op. cit. 78.



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whether it would be good to inform Tommaso Portinari so that he might tell the King of England and explain to him the harm this decision will do to H.M. and to his subjects, and that the Venetians want to be masters and dictate laws to them.

Maestro Leoni was here this morning and tells me he is engaged at Padua for two years certain and one year optional, at 2000 golden pieces yearly; and he has accepted with the intention, if he is not prevented, of practising medicine at Venice. He has taken this step deliberately and left Pisa with this intent, but has been idle for some time for his own justification. At Pisa he thought he was not well treated by the authorities and told me much about it, and that he was not regarded with the consideration he considers he had a right to expect. You he praises highly and says that he perceives that whatever good he experienced was solely through your influence and not on account of his own merits. He intends to show what learning and capabilities he possesses and to leave a name behind him. Wherever he may be he affirms that he is ever yours.—July 1491.<sup>1</sup>

### PIERO LEONI of *Spoletto* to LORENZO DE' MEDICI

I have heard what has been ordered to Your Magnificence as to the water and what the effect has been. First I must make an examination and Your Magnificence will cease taking it. It will be better not to wait until winter begins to lay in the usual provision, and Your Magnificence can take first Morba for a week and then Villa for another week. The less interval there is between the two the better. During this time I will make a trial of the said water which has arrived here in safety. I have not been able to do so on account of being occupied with lectures until the first August: then I had to go to Venice to pay my duty to the Doge and the Signoria. As

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, &c., *op. cit.* ii. 90.

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soon as I have settled the Venetian business I shall make a trial at Padua of that water for a purpose of my own, for I need it, and according to the effect obtained I shall see whether we have something different from *arzente*<sup>1</sup> water; if I find it is different, as I think, when I have tried it, I will see how to make it suit the case of Your Magnificence. If it be *arzente* water, we shall have unmasked it, which will not be at all displeasing to me. Your Magnificence can take the Morba water without further advice, except when the wind is northerly, for then it is of little or no use. Let us hope the weather will soon be fine again and then Your Magnificence is to ride fast and far after drinking the water when fasting, morning and evening. Beware of cold and damp feet, of moonlight, and of the air at sunset, and do not eat pears or swallow grape pips. I received Proculus, which has given me the more pleasure that I have long wished to possess it, and finding that it is as excellent as I supposed I shall have it translated. When finished I will do as Your Magnificence says. I have heard that Lascari found in Calabria a commentary by Proculus on the Heraclitus of Plato. I beg Your Magnificence, when you know where this commentary is, to try and get it, or to tell me so that I may try. It must be valuable because the matter in itself is good and the author is the most competent man there is in such things. No more at present. I commend myself to Your Magnificence.—Padua, August 19, 1491.<sup>2</sup>

MATTEO FRANCO *at Rome* to SER PIERO DOVIZI  
*at Florence*

Ser Piero, you know how long ago I told you of the want of order in this house and how things went from bad to worse

<sup>1</sup> *Acqua arzente* in modern Italian is the name given to water with nitrous acid in it and is used to clean silver. It is poisonous. Piero Leoni evidently suspected something wrong (perhaps poisonous) in a certain water which had been recommended to Lorenzo. He advises him to go back to his old waters until he analyses the new water.

<sup>2</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, op. cit. ii. 91.

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so that I gave up fighting; and how a Florentine was like a Cross among devils. Also I informed you of Madonna's [Maddalena] tribulations with regard to divers matters. But as I suspect you never read my letters to the end, probably these things will be new to you. With this doubt and also as a satisfaction to myself, I write, for I am bursting with pent-up rage, and know not where to turn for advice or help. When I see such coldness and want of care and affection for persons of far more importance than Franco, I cease to trouble about my own affairs, but about theirs I am in despair. No one, man or woman, ever comes to this house, save once in a blue moon, to ask whether Madonna is alive or dead. Let be that they grant her no authority, but they might ask if she is alive. Ever since our return she has been shut up in the house, save the two days spent at Cervetri, twice that she went to see the Pope, and one evening when she supped at the bank. She is always ailing and there does not seem to be a man living who takes interest in her. Cursed be that milk-cheese, those curds, those pears, that flask of trebbiano, that bundle of fennel and those medlars, that have never, never been sent to her by you or by anybody. These Genoese with the Pope have the most beautiful loggia and all the greatest marvels of the world, let alone other things of more value. While she, poor patient child, the daughter of such a man and so perfect and charming in herself, is less esteemed than would be the daughter of an exile, and as I well know there are always prevarications, excuses and justifications, saying that notice must not be taken of small things and that one day all of a sudden we shall hear the thunder and see the lightning of some important event. We shall see, my Ser Piero, but I have no faith in excuses, and the conclusion is that if you do not help to keep this house things you do not expect will happen, for which you will be sorry.

I have written all this, full of despair and anger, to others besides yourself. The bad health of Madonna Maddalena and

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the thoughtless behaviour of my Lord in keeping her up, for all this winter he has gambled every night, supping at six or seven and coming to bed at daylight, and she will not, and cannot, eat or sleep without him. Thus she has lost sleep and appetite and has become as thin as a lizard, as I told you. To the ambassador and Noferi and Ser Niccolò and to Christ, I have told this every day and kept them informed. The ambassador replies: "It is your business to write to Lorenzo, what can I do in the matter? Write, and let me act." And Noferi says: "I fear this girl will not live long, and my Lord says and does &c., and they ought to be warned at Florence, &c." Ser Niccolò, whom I asked about either summoning Maestro Piero Leoni or describing her symptoms to him and sending him the prescriptions of the doctors here, for the girl has great faith in Maestro Leoni as he treated her mother and herself and knows her constitution, made me copy out all the recipes of the doctors and said it would be well to write and that he would do so. Then he got immersed in grand doings and all has come to nought. Poor Franco runs here and runs there angered inside and out, and his heart is bursting. The worst is that he has not enough authority or brains to set things right.

Madonna's illness is caused by sitting up too late at night, eating at hours she is not used to, and remaining shut up in the house all day without taking any exercise; then, like her mother, she is melancholy, thin, and pensive, and takes every caprice and folly of her husband's to heart. She thinks and dreams of nought else, so great is her love of him. She is slowly pining away and this seems to me the most alarming symptom, for nothing she eats or drinks does her any good or gives her any pleasure. . . .

Ser Piero, I beg you as earnestly as I can to excuse me and with clasped hands I entreat you to get me away from here. First because, as I have told you several times, I cannot bear it any longer, and then because I get small honour and less gain.

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I know what I say. Madonna can do little for me and I can do even less for her in the state to which they have reduced her. I always told you none but a Franco would have endured this life. No more at present. Let us study to find a remedy for what is more important, and see that this girl should be served rather like the daughter of her father than the wife of him she has married. Let the rest go as it will. I commend myself to you.—Rome, January 16, 1492.

YOUR FRANCO.<sup>1</sup>

Lorenzo's end was fast approaching. The following extracts from Manfredi's letters show how terribly he suffered, and with what fortitude he bore extreme pain. From his last words to Filippo Valori and Andrea Cambini, who accompanied the young Cardinal Giovanni to Rome, "I entrust the youth of my son to you, you will not see me again," it is evident he knew death was near. But in the long letter to his son at Rome he makes no allusion to his own health, as though he did not wish to cloud the lad's first entrance into life. It is full of political wisdom, knowledge of the world, and fatherly foresight. After Giovanni's departure Lorenzo rallied a little, and on March 21st was carried to Careggi, attended by his favourite sister Bianca, his daughter Lucrezia, his eldest son Piero, and the faithful Poliziano.

MANFREDO DI MANFREDI, *Ambassador from Ferrara to Florence, to the DUKE ERCOLE D'ESTE*

. . . The Magnificent Lorenzo has not been able to see any of the ambassadors on account of his gout which gives him great pain. . . .—Florence, January 16, 1492.<sup>2</sup>

. . . Since several days the Magnificent Lorenzo is very ill and much tormented with pain all over the body save in the head. His agony is such that *est res miranda* how he can live. It is true the doctors do not think it is an *infirmetas ad mortem*,

<sup>1</sup> *Un Cortigiano di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, Guglielmo Volpi. Estratto del *Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana*, 1891, xvii. 229.

<sup>2</sup> *Lettere e Notizie*, &c., Arch. Pal. di Modena, *op. cit.*



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but he is very weak from want of rest. May God restore him to his usual health, for it really moves one's compassion to hear the state he is in. . . .—Florence, February 11, 1492.<sup>1</sup>

. . . For three days the Magnificent Lorenzo has been in such pain that no one could see him. . . .—Florence, March 5, 1492.<sup>2</sup>

. . . Since two days the Magnificent Lorenzo is better though he still has attacks of pain. It is thought that this perverse and very cold weather affects him. . . .—Florence, March 8, 1492.<sup>3</sup>

I have nought to report to Your Excellency save that yesterday the Most Rev. Cardinal de' Medici [Giovanni, Lorenzo's second son] left for Rome. Last Saturday he received the hat in a certain abbey, called the Abbey of Fiesole, and then in his Cardinal's robes, accompanied by us ambassadors, many bishops, and a large number of citizens, made a triumphal entry into the city. Dismounting at the palace of the Signoria he paid them a visit. He mounted again and we accompanied him to his father's house. Next day, with the same following he went to S. Liberata [the cathedral] to hear mass, which was celebrated by eight bishops with great solemnity, and at which the Illustrious Signoria assisted. At the close the Cardinal took leave of the Signoria in the church and accompanied by us went to his father's house where a magnificent banquet was prepared, at which we ambassadors assisted (having been previously invited) and sixty of the principal citizens of this State. The house was most richly adorned. Before we rose from table a great number of chiselled silver vases were presented to the Cardinal on behalf of the Signoria. A stupendous sight, for the vases were large and well ornamented. They were valued at 10,000 ducats or more, which may well be, as they weighed more than 1000 pounds. We ambassadors then went with His Illustrious Reverence to his room and rich and handsome silver vases were

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere e Notizie*, &c., Arch. Pal. di Modena, *op cit.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*



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brought by the various Communes, and the Jews of the city, but His Lordship would not accept them and gave them back to the donors with fair words of thanks. Likewise he accepted nothing from any citizen save from his relations, who gave him splendid gifts. The Magnificent Lorenzo, though in pain, came into the hall where we were dining to see the Cardinal and us ambassadors, and has begun to ride again, although often seized with pain. . . .—Florence, March 13, 1492.<sup>1</sup>

LORENZO DE' MEDICI *to his son, CARDINAL GIOVANNI,  
at Rome, in March 1492*

MESSER GIOVANNI,—You are much beholden to our Lord God, as we all are for your sake, as besides many benefits and honours our house has received from Him it has pleased Him to bestow on you the highest dignity our family has yet enjoyed. Great as this is it is much enhanced by circumstances, particularly your youth and our condition. Therefore my first recommendation is that you endeavour to be grateful to our Lord God, remembering every hour that it is not by your own merits or solicitude that you have attained the Cardinalate, but by the grace of God. Show your gratitude to Him by leading a saintly, exemplary, and honest life. You are the more bound to do this because during your youth, you have shown a disposition which gives hope of good fruit. It would be indeed most shameful, contrary to your duty, and to my expectations if at a time when others generally acquire more reason and a better understanding of life, you should forget the good precepts learned as a boy. It is incumbent on you to try and lighten the burden of the dignity you have attained by leading a pure life and persevering in the studies suitable to your profession. I was greatly pleased last year to learn that without being reminded by any one you had been several times

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere e Notizie, &c., Arch. Pal. di Modena, op. cit.*

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to confession and to communion, for I conceive there is no better way of obtaining the grace of God than by habituating oneself to persevere in these duties. This seems to me the best advice I can begin with. I know, as you are now going to Rome, that sink of all iniquities, that you will find some difficulty in following it, as bad examples are always catching, and inciters to vice will not be wanting. Your promotion to the Cardinalate, as you may imagine, at your age and for the other reasons already mentioned, will be viewed with great envy, and those who were not able to prevent your attaining this dignity will endeavour, little by little, to diminish it by lowering you in public estimation and causing you to slide into the same ditch into which they have themselves fallen, counting on success because of your youth. You must be all the firmer in your stand against these difficulties, as at present one sees such a lack of virtue in the College. I recollect however to have known a good many learned and good men in the College, leading exemplary lives. It will be well that you should follow their example, for by so doing you will be the more known and esteemed as being different from the others. It is imperative above all things that you should avoid as you would Scylla and Charybdis the reputation of being a hypocrite and of evil fame. Be not ostentatious, and have a care to avoid anything offensive in conduct and in conversation, without affecting austerity or severity. These are things you will in time understand and practise better, I conceive, than I can write them. You know how important is the position and the example of a Cardinal, and that the world would be far better if the Cardinals were what they ought to be, for then there would always be a good Pope, from whom emanates, one may say, peace for all Christians. Make every effort therefore to be this, if others had done so we might hope for universal good. Nothing is more difficult than to hold converse with men of various characters, and in this I can ill advise you; only recollect when with the Cardinals and other men of rank to try and be charitable and respectful in

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your conversation, weighing your reasons well without being influenced by the passions of others; for many desiring what they cannot attain turn reason into abuse. Satisfy your conscience therefore by taking care that your conversation with every man should be devoid of offence. This seems to me a general rule most applicable in your case, for should passion by chance make an enemy, as his enmity would have no reasonable cause he may sometimes return with more ease to the old friendship. It will be better I think on this, your first visit to Rome, to use your ears more than your tongue. To-day I have given you entirely to our Lord God and to Holy Church; it is therefore essential that you become a good ecclesiastic, cherishing the honour and the State of Holy Church and of the Apostolic See above aught else in this world, and devoting yourself entirely to their interests. While doing this it will not be difficult for you to aid the city and our house, for the city being united to the Church you will represent the solid chain, and our house is part of the city. Although it is impossible to foresee what may happen I think it is likely that a way will be found to save, as the proverb says, the goat and the cabbages, always keeping steadfastly to your above-mentioned duty of setting the interests of the Church above all else. You are the youngest Cardinal, not only of the College, but the youngest that has hitherto been made, it is therefore most necessary that where you have to compete with the others you should be the most eager and the humblest, and avoid making others wait for you in Chapel, in Consistory, or in Deputation. You will soon learn who has a good or an evil reputation. With the latter avoid any great intimacy, not only on your own account, but for the sake of public opinion; converse in a general way with all. I advise you on feast-days to be rather below than above moderation, and would rather see a well-appointed stable and a well-ordered and cleanly household than magnificence and pomp. Let your life be regular and reduce your expenses gradually in the future, for the retinue and the

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master being both new at first it will be difficult. Jewels and silken stuffs must be used sparingly by one in your position. Rather have a few good antiques and fine books, and well-bred and learned attendants, than many of them. Ask people to your own house oftener than you accept invitations to theirs, but do both sparingly. Eat plain food and take much exercise, for those who wear your habit, if not careful, easily contract maladies. The rank of Cardinal is as secure as it is great, men therefore often become negligent; they conceive they have done enough and that without exertion they can preserve their position. This is often prejudicial to character and to life, and a thing against which you must guard; rather trust too little than too much in others. One rule I recommend to you above all others, and that is to get up betimes; besides being good for health one can meditate over and arrange all the business of the following day, and in your position, having to say the office, to study, to give audiences &c. you will find it most useful. Another thing absolutely necessary to one in your station is to reflect, particularly at this, the commencement of your career, in the evening on all you have to do next day, so that an unforeseen event may not come upon you unawares. (As to speaking in the Consistory, I think it would be more seemly and becoming if you refer all that comes before you to ~~His Holiness~~, alleging that as you are young and inexperienced you consider it your duty to submit everything to the most learned judgment of His Holiness. You will probably be asked to intercede in various matters with our Holy Father. Be cautious however at the beginning to ask as few favours as possible and not to bother him; the disposition of the Pope is to be grateful to those who do not break his-ears. Bear this in mind in order not to annoy him. When you see him, talk about amusing things, and if you have to beg, do it with all humility and modesty. This will please him and be in accordance with his nature. Keep well.—Florence.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, op. cit. ii. 308 et seq.

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CARDINAL GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI to his father LORENZO  
MAGNIFICO VIRO LAURENTIO DE MEDICI PATER  
OPTIMO

*Salvus sis*,—In case . . .<sup>1</sup> (I) did not tell you of some things. On Friday morning I was given a public reception and went accompanied by all the Cardinals, nearly the whole court, and very heavy rain, from S.M. del Popolo to the palace and from the palace to Campo di Fiore. Our Holy Father received me most graciously: I hardly spoke to him. The following day the ambassadors waited on our Holy Father; their audience was most satisfactory. The Pope desired to hear me the day after, which is to-day. I have been, and His Holiness spoke as lovingly as was possible to me, and reminded me, and advised me, to do something when I visited these Cardinals, and I have begun to do so with those to whom as yet I have paid visits. Another time I will tell you who they are. All professed the greatest good-will towards you. Of former things I know that you have been told. Of myself I have nought to say save that I will try hard to do you honour. *De me proloqui ulterius, nefas.* The news that you are so much better has been a great joy to me and I have no other wish than to hear this often. For this I send thanks to Ser Piero [Leoni, the doctor]. I commend myself to you. No more at present.—Rome, March 25, 1492. Jo. FILIUS.<sup>2</sup>

In a letter to Jacopo Antiquario, Poliziano describes the malady from which Lorenzo had been suffering and then continues:

. . . The day before his death, being at his villa of Careggi, he grew so weak that all hope of his recovery vanished.

<sup>1</sup> Paper torn.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Leo X.*, W. Roscoe, Appendix i. 408. H. G. Bohn, London, 1853.



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Perceiving this, like a wise man he called for the confessor to purge himself of past sins. This same confessor told me afterwards that he marvelled to see with what courage and constancy Lorenzo prepared himself for death; how well he ordered all things pertaining thereunto, and with what faith and religious feeling he reflected on the world to come. Towards midnight while he was quietly meditating he was informed that the priest bearing the Holy Sacrament had arrived. Rousing himself he exclaimed, "It shall never be said that my Lord who created and saved me shall come to me—in my room—raise me, I beg of you, raise me quickly so that I may go and meet Him." Saying this he raised himself as well as he could and, supported by his servants, advanced to meet the priest in the outer room. There crying he knelt down.

Poliziano gives a long prayer recited by Lorenzo and then continues :

These and other things he said sobbing, while all around cried bitterly. At length the priest ordered that he should be raised from the ground and carried to his bed, in order to receive the Viaticum in more comfort. For some time he resisted, but at last out of respect for the priest he consented. In bed repeating almost the same prayer, with much gravity and devotion he received the body and blood of Christ. Then he devoted himself to consoling his son Piero, for the others were not there, and exhorted him to bear this law of necessity with courage, feeling sure that the aid of Heaven would be vouchsafed to him, as it had been to himself in many and divers occasions, if he only acted wisely. Meanwhile your Lazarus, the doctor from Pavia, arrived, most learned as it seemed to me, but summoned too late to be of any use. Yet to do something he ordered various precious stones to be pounded together in a mortar for I know not what kind of medicine.



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Lorenzo thereupon asked the servants what the doctor was doing in his room and what he was preparing, and when I answered that he was composing a remedy to comfort his intestines he recognised my voice, and looking kindly as is his wont: "Oh Angiolo, he said, art thou here?" and raising his languid arms took both my hands and pressed them tightly. I could not stifle my sobs or stay my tears though I tried to hide them by turning my face away. But he showed no emotion and continued to press my hands between his. When he saw that I could not speak for crying, quite naturally he loosened my hands, and I ran into the adjoining room where I could give free vent to my grief and to my tears. Then drying my eyes I returned, and as soon as he saw me he called me to him and asked what Pico della Mirandola was doing. I replied that Pico had remained in town fearing to molest him with his presence. "And I," said Lorenzo, "but for the fear that the journey here might be irksome to him would be most glad to see him and speak to him for the last time before I leave you all." I asked if I should send for him. "Certainly, and with all speed," answered he. This I did, and Pico came and sat by the bed, whilst I leaned against his knees in order to hear the languid voice of my lord for the last time. With what goodness, with what courtesy, I may say with what caresses, Lorenzo received him. First he asked his pardon for thus disturbing him, begging him to regard it as a sign of the friendship—the love—he bore him, assuring him that he died more willingly after seeing so dear a friend. Then introducing, as was his wont, pleasant and familiar sayings, he joked also with us. "I wish," he said to Pico, "that death had spared me until your library had been complete." Pico had hardly left the room when Fra Girolamo [Savonarola] of Ferrara, a man celebrated for his doctrine and his sanctity and an excellent preacher, came in. To his exhortations to remain firm in his faith and to live in future, if God granted him life, free from crime, or if God so willed it to receive death willingly, Lorenzo

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answered that he was firm in his religion, that his life would always be guided by it, and that nothing could be sweeter to him than death, if such was the divine will. Fra Girolamo then turned to go when Lorenzo said: "Oh Father, before going deign to give me thy benediction." Bowing his head, immersed in piety and religion he repeated the words and the prayers of the friar, without paying any attention to the grief now openly shown of his attendants. It seemed that all, save Lorenzo, were going to die, so calm was he. He gave no signs of anxiety or of sorrow; even in that supreme moment he showed his usual strength of mind and his fortitude. The doctors who stood round, not to seem idle, worried him with their remedies and assistance. He submitted to everything they suggested, not because he thought it would save him, but in order not to offend any one, even in death. To the last he had such mastery over himself that he joked about his own death. Thus when given something to eat and asked how he liked it he replied: "As well as a dying man can like anything." He embraced us all tenderly and humbly asked pardon if during his illness he had caused annoyance to any one. Then disposing himself to receive extreme unction he commended his soul to God. The Gospel containing the Passion of Christ was then read and he showed that he understood by moving his lips, or raising his languid eyes, or sometimes moving his fingers. Gazing upon a silver crucifix inlaid with precious stones and kissing it from time to time, he expired. . . . —Fiesole, May 18, 1492.<sup>1</sup>

This is Poliziano's account of the last hours of Lorenzo. The authority for the following by Fra Pacifico Cinozzi, is Fra Silvestro, the adherent of Savonarola who went to the stake with him, and who professed to have heard it from the lips of his master. To say the least it would be unusual for a dying man who had already confessed and received the Viaticum to wish to make a second confession, and to receive absolution from

<sup>1</sup> *Laurentii Medicis Vita*, op cit. i. 199 et seq.

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another priest. Again, had Savonarola left Careggi as described by Fra Pacifico, Lorenzo's body would hardly have been carried to S. Marco before the funeral and the burial in S. Lorenzo.

"Now it pleased God that Lorenzo fell ill, and becoming worse and nigh unto death he sent for the said Father Fra Ieronimo, using these very words: 'Go for the Father Fra Ieronimo, for I have never found one save him who was an honest friar.' Thus going to Careggi, where Lorenzo was, he entered and after a few words Lorenzo said he desired to make his confession. Fra Ieronimo answered he was willing, but before hearing the confession he wished to mention three things, if these were acceded to no doubt whatever his salvation was assured. Lorenzo replied he was willing and would do what was asked. The Father said: 'Lorenzo, it is needful for you to have great faith,' and he answered: 'Father, that I have.' Fra Ieronimo then added the second: 'Also it is needful that you restore what has been wrongfully taken.' After reflecting for a while he answered: 'Father, I will do so, or I will cause my heirs to do it if I cannot.' The Father then said: 'It is needful for you to give back to the Republic the liberty of the city, and to see that she returns to her ancient state.' To these words he gave no reply. Thus the said Father departed without further confession, and not long after Lorenzo died. These words I heard from Fra Silvestro who died together with Fra Ieronimo; and I believe he knew and heard them from Father Fra Ieronimo."<sup>1</sup>

Popular opinion in Florence at the time certainly seems to favour Poliziano's account. Bartolommeo Cerretani, who noted

<sup>1</sup> *Epistola di Fra Placido Cinozzi in Scelta di Prediche e Scritti di Fra Girolamo Savonarola, con nuovi documenti intorno alla sua vita*, P. Villari e E. Casanuova. G. C. Sansoni, Firenze, 1898, p. 16. The *Biographia Latina* of Savonarola follows Cinozzi's account, citing Fra Silvestro and Fra Domenico, an ardent adherent of Savonarola, as authorities. The same story, with additions, is given by the biographers of Savonarola, Pico della Mirandola (a nephew of Lorenzo's friend) and Burlamacchi. "There is," says Creighton, "no evidence that Pico, the earliest of them, had written his book before 1520; whether Burlamacchi wrote independently or merely re-edited Pico is a question open to discussion."

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... events carefully in his chronicle, wrote on April 7, 1492: "About the fifth hour Lorenzo received the Sacraments." A few days later Benedetto Dei wrote the following letter to his uncle, who was an adherent of the Medici and often went to foreign lands on their commercial business. Curious readers will find the discrepancies between the two narratives discussed in Creighton's *History of the Papacy*, Villari's *Life and Times of Savonarola*, and Horsburgh's *Lorenzo the Magnificent*.

BARTOLOMMEO DEI to his uncle BENEDETTO DEI, with  
*Machiavelli in Ferrara*

DEAREST UNCLE,—On Saturday last the 7th I wrote in answer to your letter giving you full accounts of our private affairs, of the house, and of everything, which I conclude you received. Giannotto was too busy to write, and probably will not even have time to-day, being so occupied with that business you know of; it is in danger in consequence of the sad event of which you have heard. I did not write to you before on account of the universal grief and tribulation, so that not only writing but even thinking about it was difficult. It is true that on Saturday I wrote you word that the Magnificent Lorenzo was at Careggi for change of air, not well, and in pain it was said. In the evening after my letter had gone it was reported that he had a slight fainting fit, but no one was alarmed, chiefly because of that accursed Maestro Piero Leoni of Spoleto, who to the very last insisted that he could not die of that malady. On Saturday arrived the doctor from Milan, who at once saw that he had been wrongly treated, and prepared many remedies, but it was too late. He ought to have had cold things and he was given hot. Finally on Sunday, after the fourth hour of night, according to the will of Him who rules the world, he quitted this life in the flower of his age, and most assuredly far too soon, to the great and bitter sorrow of the whole city; and with every reason, for no doubt we have lost the splendour not only of Tuscany but of all Italy.

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Every day we shall learn more what we have lost. As yet it cannot be calculated, but time will show.

The other terrible event is the insane death of Maestro Piero Leoni, who when he saw his lying science had deceived him, which some say was allied to necromancy, went out of his mind, and was taken to the house of the Martelli near by, that is to say at S. Gervasio, where he was well treated, and passed the night full of melancholy and without speaking or answering any one. In the early morning he called for a towel and washed his face at a well, and asked a peasant how deep the water was. He was left leaning against the edge, and a short time afterwards a woman went to draw water, and found him head downwards in the well; half of his body was above water. She gave the alarm, and then was seen the miserable end of a man of such erudition who had used his science ill.

This created a great stir among the people who were already much troubled by what had happened. But when it was proved that madness alone had impelled the deed accusations made by idle tongues ceased, and people said it served him right that he should have taken his own life. There was no bruise or hurt on the handsome body, and to those who saw, it was a sad spectacle. For a day it lay there by the well, and was then buried in a field like those who elect to die thus.

On Monday evening at one of the clock [an hour after sundown] the body of Lorenzo was borne by the Company of the Magi into the sacristy of S. Lorenzo in the coffin wherein it had been brought from Careggi the night before, with many torches and tapers. The next day, that is Tuesday, the 10th, the funeral took place without much pomp, as had always been the custom of their ancestors, without banners. There were but three Orders of friars and one of priests; in truth, great pomp could not be shown, for the greatest splendour would have been small for such a man. But wonderful was the number of citizens and nobles, in long black robes touching the ground, who came to do him honour; it was a fine spectacle,



## LORENZO DI PIERO DE' MEDICI

and touching to see such manifest signs of sadness and of sorrow.

The visits to Piero have been many of the whole city, and by common accord all agree in maintaining him in the position of his father. As a commencement a motion was carried by acclamation in the Council which is to be published on Monday, declaring that Piero is to be one of the Seventy in his father's place, and is eligible for all offices, the Council of Eight, the Twelve procurators, the Accoppiatori, the Operai of the Palace, and so on, which the Magnificent Lorenzo filled or might have filled, and this notwithstanding his being under age. It was a great thing and carried unanimously, and all united together to do him honour with the hope that he will be a worthy heir of all his father's virtues.

Lorenzo lived forty-three years three months and six days, having been born on January 2, 1448.<sup>1</sup> He died so nobly and with such patience, understanding, and reverence towards God, as the most religious man and divine soul could show; with such holy words on his lips that he seemed another S. Jerome. God be merciful to him.—Florence, April 14, 1492. Your servant,  
BARTOLOMMEO DEI.<sup>2</sup>

Lorenzo was buried by the side of his brother Giuliano under the sarcophagus fashioned by Verrocchio for Cosimo and Piero in the Old Sacristy of S. Lorenzo, but in 1559 the coffins were removed and placed in a vault under the statue of the Madonna by Michelangelo in the New Sacristy. No epitaph, not even his name, marks the spot where the Magnificent Lorenzo lies. King Ferrante's words when he heard of his death were prophetic: "This man has lived long enough for his own immortal fame, but not for Italy. God grant that now he is dead men may not attempt that which they dared not do while he was alive."

<sup>1</sup> Dei gives wrong dates. Lorenzo was born on January 1, 1449 (1450).

<sup>2</sup> *Archivio Storico Italiano*, Serie v. Tomo iv., Dispensa 5 e 6 del 1889, p. 258.





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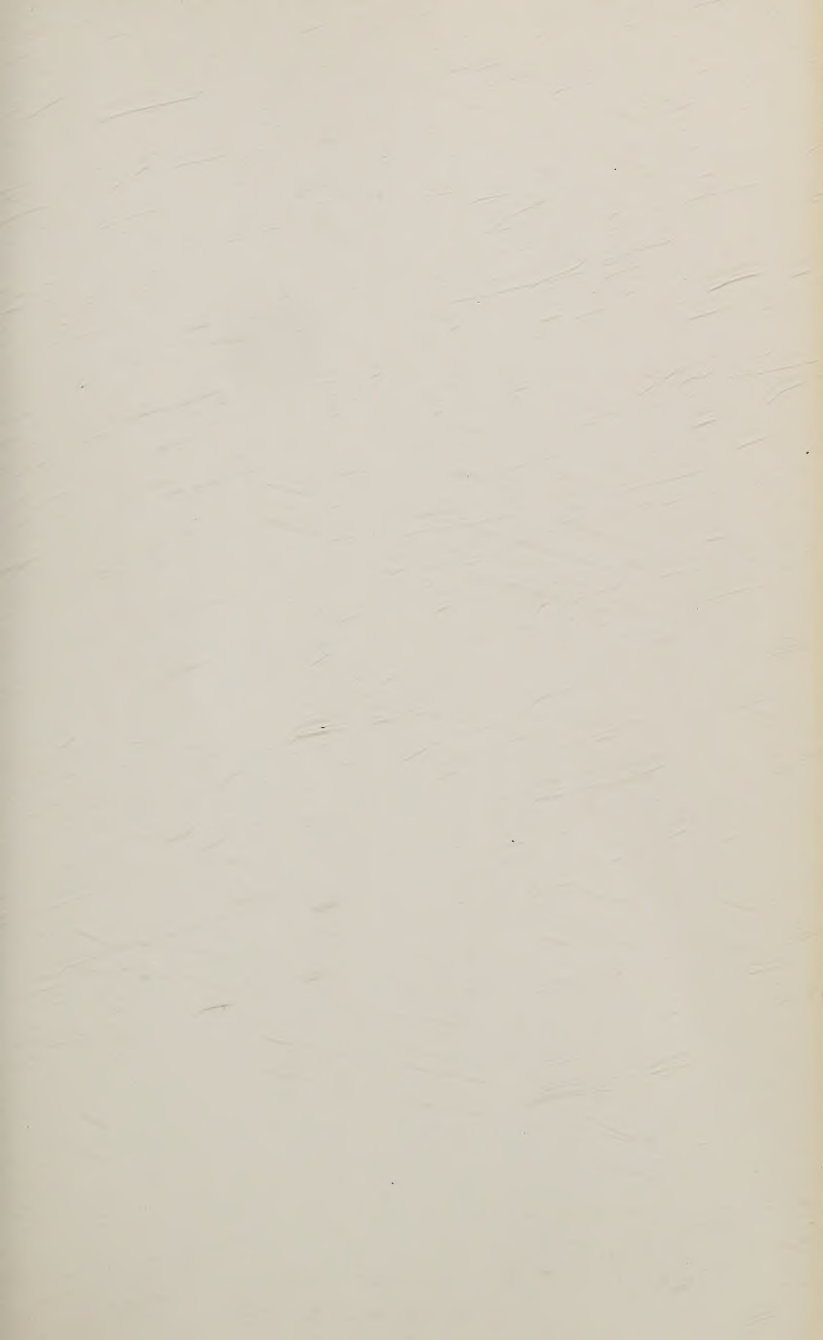






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